Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

ARTHUR HORNER

British Labour and the World

FRANK PITCAIRN

Enemies of the People

TOM MANN & BEN TILLETT

Seeing Socialism

JANUARY 1938 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

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Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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A New Year Appeal

THE LABOUR MONTHLY *enters the New Year—and opens its 20th volume—in a new dress. Typographical improvements have been introduced which, while retaining a sense of continuity will, it is hoped, prove agreeable to readers, since their aim is to make the magazine more convenient and attractive.*

This added attraction surely suggests at once the possibility of winning new readers. Of the necessity of a further, and substantial increase in the LABOUR MONTHLY'S *circulation no one of our present readers, we imagine, requires to be convinced. As the premier Marxist journal of the English-speaking world the* LABOUR MONTHLY *has a unique place in the periodical literature of the Labour Movement.*

In the coming year it is clear that the need for a journal like ours will be greater than ever. But the work that the LABOUR MONTHLY *does is still hampered by a burden of debt which it is necessary to reduce. We therefore urgently appeal to our readers for a New Year Gift to our debt fund. Let us begin* 1938 *in a really big way!*

EDITORIAL BOARD.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Outlook for 1938—The Great Divide—The War Offensive—No Defeatism — Britain's Hour of Decision — "The Gendarme of Europe" — Britain's Historic Rôle — Versailles — Rearming Germany — Locarno — Conservatism and Nazism — Helping Hitler — Macbeth and the Murderers — A "New Locarno" — "Liberal" Masquerade — Propaganda for Hitler — Open Manœuvres — Path to War — The Soviet Union To-day—Main Aims of War Offensive — British Alignment — A Positive Policy — The Choice in Britain

WITH deep anxiety the world enters 1938. Millions are in the midst of war; for all peoples the sense of war, preparations for war and expectations of war are very close. It is now the seventh year since the modern war offensive opened out of the last world economic crisis and has since continuously extended with widening sweep each year. To-day capitalism shows signs of entering into a new stage of economic crisis spreading through the world, which means the immediate sharpening of all conflicts. It is therefore likely that we are approaching decisive issues in this coming year and the culmination of this seven year period. *With 1938 we are approaching the Great Divide of the international situation.*

NEVER was it more necessary to face coolly the realities of the situation and the decisions we have to make. There are dangerous signs of tendencies to pessimism and helplessness, of a sense of being overwhelmed by the pace of events, infecting wide strata of the peoples, and even of the Labour Movement. At the very moment when the strongest, confident united leadership is necessary, there is widespread faltering, confusion and division of policy. This is the real danger of the situation. Seven years ago it was still

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necessary to give warning of the menace of the war drive arising from the economic crisis, and where it was leading. To-day this is no longer necessary ; it is obvious to all. What to-day is above all necessary is to combat the pessimism which begins to give in beforehand to the war offensive like a hypnotised rabbit, to see only the inevitable power and advance of fascism and the sickness and weakness of the democracies. This pessimism is based on a false estimate of the real forces, and especially of the real reasons for the deep division within the formally democratic countries (a division which also exists, in concealed form, in the fascist countries).

IT is perfectly true that the war offensive of the reactionary and fascist Powers has continuously extended during these seven years, owing to the division and disorganisation of the peace forces ; and that with each year the situation has grown more serious owing to the policy of retreat before each blow. We all know the deadly catalogue of events from the Japanese conquest of Manchuria and the first collapse of the League in 1931-2 ; the coming of Hitler to power in 1933, the Nazi rearmament and the German-Polish Treaty in 1934 ; the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, Italy's war on Abyssinia and the second collapse of the League in 1935 ; the Nazi armed occupation of the Rhineland, the Berlin-Rome axis and the German-Japanese Treaty, the German-Italian war of intervention in Spain and the third exposure of the democratic forces through the Non-Intervention Committee in 1936 ; and in 1937 the intensified German-Italian offensive in Spain, reinforced by British recognition of Franco, Japan's advance to war on China as a whole and invasion of Central China, with the fourth exposure of the League and Washington forces through the Brussels Conference, and the culminating Triple Pact of fascist aggression, reinforced by the Anglo-German negotiations of Halifax and Hitler for the surrender of Central Europe to Hitler. All these make a straight line of development ; and there is no mistaking where that line leads.

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BUT it is also true that during all these seven years—a long period in relation to their plans, to the sharpening problem of internal conditions in the fascist countries, and to the tempo of post-war development—the war forces of fascism have not yet been able to get beyond the preliminary stages and advance to their major plans, owing to the strength of resistance of the Spanish and Chinese peoples and their supporters in other countries, the strength of the People's Front in France and, above all, the increasing strength of the Soviet Union. Franco was not able to fulfil his boast of being in Madrid in the Christmas of 1936 ; the Chinese people were never so united in resistance ; the Franco-Soviet Pact still stands ; the armed insurrectionist plots of Fascism's agents in France have been exposed, and fascism's agents in the Soviet Union have been smashed ; five years after power Hitler's dreams of the conquest of the Ukraine are as far off as ever ; the Soviet Union is stronger than ever, and working-class unity slowly advances with the new move to international trade union unity. If all this has been achieved with the British National Government sabotaging the democratic forces and assisting fascism, and with the British Labour Movement sabotaging working-class unity, what could not be achieved once the British people could be awakened and mobilised for the real issues before them ? Undoubtedly much ground has been lost ; the situation is serious ; the price has had to be paid in countless deaths and suffering. But, thanks to the sacrifice of those who have stood the test, 1938 is not yet too late for the decisive issues. The big decisions are still in front.

PARTICULARLY for the people of Britain the big decisions are now before us, which will play a governing rôle for the future of the world. The British ruling class, which has been and still is sharply divided and groping in its policy, is now engaged in determining its major orientation in the world situation, between the fascist camp, the dreams of isolation or vacillating support to the democratic camp in order to carry out the policy of the balance of power. *This decision is not a foregone conclusion :* the divisions and vacilla-

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tions are still considerable, and just this provides the opportunity for the working class and democratic forces, if they can only unite and fight on a concrete positive policy, to influence and finally (by the defeat of the National Government) determine the decision. The British Labour Movement is beginning to show the first signs of a partial, incomplete stirring and awakening, but still only on isolated issues half-way, not yet drawing the masses into activity, and not yet on the main fight of major policy against the National Government and its war programme, and for working class unity to defeat it. The situation is for this reason especially dangerous in the coming months. The signs of the new depression are drawing over Britain without the preparedness of the movement on the industrial side owing to the present passivity. At the same time the National Government is considering the possibility of a snap general election in order to strengthen its hand for the coming decisions and take advantage of the political unpreparedness of the opposition. There is no time to lose in changing this situation.

IN his article in this month's issue the President of the South Wales Miners' Federation, Arthur Horner, describes from recent experience on a delegation abroad on behalf of the Miners' Federation, meeting representatives of many countries, what he has been " shocked " to find as the general estimate of the rôle of Britain and the British Labour Movement on the part of a wide range of international socialist and trade union opinion. His words are moving and stick in the memory. " We have sunk in the eyes of people who look at us from outside into a position which every decent member of the working class would be bound to be ashamed of." " Britain occupies a disgraceful position before the eyes of other people, and it is futile for the working class to expect to be relieved of a measure of responsibility for this." " Before the war Tsarism was regarded as the definite enemy of everything which was progressive, as the bulwark on which all reaction rested. Now twenty-five years later it is Britain which is being regarded as the cover for everything reactionary. Britain is being regarded in a new way, as fulfilling the

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rôle in world affairs that formerly the Tsar occupied. If our people could be made to feel the shame of it, the shame that by the National Government we are in disgrace in the eyes of the world." *These are hard words. It would be well if they could be sounded from every platform in the country.*

BUT it is also true, as Horner further points out, that this position is not yet understood by the people of this country or by the Labour Movement. The international rôle of the National Government is hidden, because it presents its policy for home consumption as a policy of avoiding war commitments. Even many liberal democratic critics of the National Government would recoil from the comparison of its rôle with the rôle of Tsarism as wildly exaggerated. Is not Hitler, is not fascism the leader of world reaction to-day, and does not the crime of the National Government lie in its "weakness" to fascism? Here lies the point of confusion which weakens the whole fight. For in fact this comparison, even though no analogy may be pressed too far, does contain a profound element of truth. British imperialism is to-day the dominant world power of imperialism. Neither Hitler, nor Japan, still less Italy, is comparable as a world power with British imperialism. Hitler could never have come to power, carried through his rearmament, torn up Versailles or reached his present point of power and aggression without the protection of British imperialism. Japan could never have initiated its present aggression in the Far East without the protection in the first stages of British imperialism. The rôle of the British ruling class as the buttress of reaction throughout the world is not a new one. It can be traced back to the days when Britain led, organised and financed the world fight of reaction to crush the French Revolution. But in the post-war period, since the Russian Revolution, and still more since the advance of fascism, this world reactionary rôle has taken on a new significance.

IN the Versailles Treaty (which the *Times* of May 12, 1919, described as "almost unique among the Treaties of the world in the careful consideration that its framers have given

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to the principles of a just settlement ") the British and French imperialist victors sought to achieve two objects: first, to despoil, smash and chain up German imperialism for ever; and second, to build an unbreakable front of counter-revolution against Bolshevism. Fear of Germany and fear of Bolshevism governed the statesmen of Versailles, and produced the peculiar and hypocritical characteristics of that Treaty. These two objectives united Britain and France in uneasy alliance in the first years after the war. But no sooner had the Treaty of Versailles been signed, and the major extra-European spoils secured by Britain in the shape of colonial possessions, destruction of the German Navy and seizure of German shipping, than Britain set to work to undermine the European settlement in order to weaken French domination in Europe. The veilled alliance of Britain with the reactionary elements in Germany began.

MILLIONS of men had died in the world war on the side of the Allies in order, as they believed, to chain up German militarism for ever and prevent it ever again threatening democracy in the world. In a military sense an absolute victory was won, and unlimited power to dictate whatever terms were thought fit. Clemenceau fought to include in the Versailles Treaty the most ruthless provisions that could be devised to disarm Germany and prevent it ever becoming armed again. But there was one element in the situation which even Clemenceau could not master, and that was that the joint holder of the key to the door was "perfidious Albion." From the moment of the signing of the Treaty Britain set to work to rebuild Germany. At first extreme caution was necessary, since there was extreme fear of the victory of the working-class revolution in Germany. But once Social Democracy had done its work, and once Anglo-American finance had successfully weakened France and imposed the Dawes scheme of economic servitude on the German people, Britain came out into the open with its distinctive policy, smashed the French scheme of the Protocol or an all-inclusive universal system of security, and carried through in 1925 its characteristic policy of Locarno or the

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Western European Pact. *Here the real basic continuing line of British policy in post-war Europe through all the apparent vacillations was revealed—the policy of the Western European Pact.* Against whom? Contemporary semi-official explanations, no less than subsequent memoirs, made abundantly clear. Against the Soviet Union, in the first place, and in the second place against the main rival of British imperialism after the defeat of Germany, against the United States.

THERE is no doubt that Locarno was intended to be followed by the combined crusade of imperialism under British leadership against the Soviet Union in order to carry through the basic counter-revolutionary task which had been unsuccessfully attempted under British leadership in the years after the war. The endeavour to carry through this plan was, however, delayed during 1926 by the internal difficulties of British imperialism through the general strike and through the advance of the Chinese national revolution. Not until 1927, after the betrayal of the general strike and of the Chinese revolution, was the Baldwin Government ready to act. Britain sounded the call to action with the Arcos raid, broke off relations with the Soviet Union, alongside the parallel raids on the Soviet diplomatic offices in Shanghai, Pekin and Canton, and the murder of the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw, and approached Paris and Berlin to follow its lead.

THE Birkenhead Mission was sent to Berlin to propose to Stresemann, according to the governmental *Vossische Zeitung*, a rupture with the Soviet Union and the formation of a British-French-German "Reconstruction Syndicate to support the bourgeois-democratic Russian Government which after the collapse of the Soviet Government would come to the helm." The scheme broke down. France, in place of following the British lead, began negotiations with the Soviet Union for a non-aggression treaty. Stresemann made clear that the strength of working class and democratic opposition in Germany made such a policy unthinkable until German imperialism had been rearmed. It was from this point that British reaction became clear that the first step must be the

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crushing of the German working class, and began to look to Hitler and the Nazis as its hope in Europe. The close associations of British Conservatism and the City with Hitler and the Nazis began from the time of the world economic crisis.

BRITISH finance-capital, which had already played its part in the backing of Mussolini and Horthy, helped Hitler to power and made possible his rearmament. Britain did everything to discredit Brüning, and to refuse to German democracy what it was later to pour out with lavish hands to German fascism. Without the credits of the City, the direct aid of the British armament firms and the protection of the Foreign Office German rearmament would have been impossible. As soon as Hitler came to power, Britain joined Mussolini in carrying through the Four Power Pact in 1933, and proposed at Geneva the rearmament of Germany. At the outset Hitler-Germany was still in a position of hopeless armed inferiority, with France, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia surrounding it with overwhelming armed forces, and with every legal provision to prevent its rearmament. In 1933 Poland proposed to France immediate measures under the League of Nations to check German rearmament. British influence terrorised the French Radical Cabinet into refusing this proposal ; and the German-Polish Treaty followed in 1934. In 1935 the Anglo-German Naval Agreement carried through, without France, the repudiation of the naval disarmament clauses of Versailles.

BY the spring of 1936, when the German armed occupation of the Rhineland tore to pieces the remainder of the Versailles and Locarno peace system and proclaimed the challenge of German military power, the recent revelations of the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Senate, Berenger, revealed that Poland and Jugoslavia once again notified to France that they were ready to support any action to check the German advance, while it could still be checked. " M. Berenger added," according to the press reports, " that it was still too early to say why France did not mobilise at that time, but he hinted that it might have

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been due to British resistance." The same pressure on France was carried through as over the Non-Intervention Committee to protect the German-Italian aggression in Spain. Hitler and Mussolini may appear publicly as the villains of the piece ; but an examination of the close association of British and German financial interests in Spain, as well as in other parts of the world, would show how far the rôle of Hitler and Mussolini has been in practice the rôle of the " strong-arm men " of the City financiers (like the Shakespearean First Murderer and Second Murderer, while Macbeth shivers in a palsy in London). Whatever the present particular contradictions, the fact remains that Britain holds the primary responsibility for the present armed power of Germany in Europe, no less than of Japan in the Far East.

TO-DAY, when Hitler's power has been built up by the British National Government, this same National Government turns to the British people to declare that, in view of Germany's great power, it is necessary, first, to carry through a gigantic rearmament programme, which is bringing enormous profits to the British capitalists and strengthening the weapons in the hands of world reaction, and second, to recognise in a " realist " spirit the inevitable advance of fascist power and domination in Europe and to seek to come to terms with it by conceding its demands. Chamberlain writes his love-letters to Mussolini; Halifax waits on Hilter in Berlin. And once again, as in 1925, as in 1933, arises the scheme of the Western European Pact, presented in the dress of a " New Locarno "—but this time with the fascist counter-revolution openly dominating the scheme, directly represented by two of the partners and favoured and protected by the third, while France is to be isolated and subjected to the armed preparations of fascism for the overthrow of its régime. We have indeed travelled a long way from Versailles in these eighteen years; and the exponents of British policy may well rub their hands for the moment at the success of their plans; but the more far-sighted are already wringing their hands at the spirits they have conjured up.

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THIS scheme of the deal with fascism and the Western European Pact is enthusiastically applauded by the bulk of the Conservative reaction, who are still convinced that the main enemies of the British Empire are not Hitler, Mussolini and Japan, but democracy, liberalism and socialism. And we have now reached a stage when a large-scale operation is being executed to sell this proposition to the still hesitant elements of liberal democratic opinion, who fear war, who are ready to look eagerly and hopefully to anything that is labelled "peace," but who are none the less apprehensive at the open brutality, bloodthirstiness and annexationist aims of fascism. Therefore the proposition is being decked out in a "liberal" masquerade to deceive the innocent.

A SPATE of propaganda is let loose on the "injustices" of Versailles, the "just grievances" of Hitler, the question of "colonial claims," the question of national minorities in Europe, the necessity of "revising" the Covenant and "broadening the basis" of the League, and even of recognising sympathetically what the British Ambassador in Berlin has with original wit called the "great social experiment" that Hitler is conducting in Germany. Foremost in the van of this threadbare propaganda is the snivelling *Times* (whose opinion in 1919 on the "unique justice" of Versailles we have already quoted), the meanest time-serving journal in England, which kicked the beaten democratic Germany because it was weak and fawns on Hitler because he appears strong. Along with the motley crowd of worn out reactionaries of the type of Garvin (both journals being run by the same millionaire family), of the Mosleyite *Daily Mail*, of Tory Ministers, High Society ladies, Bank of England magnates, the Ribbentrop menage and the Nazi network, the pro-fascist "liberals" and "pacifists" and even "Labour lords," the Lothians and Allens and Arnolds and the pacifist exponents of the Peace Pledge Union (who write to proclaim their official support of the editorial line of the *Times*) unite with the extreme reaction behind the slogan of "justice for Hitler."

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HOW many liberals are being taken in by this propaganda, which is in fact the propaganda of fascist war and war-preparation? That is a serious question to-day. How many liberals, pacifists and christians are shedding tears over the "injustice" of Hitler's being deprived of the opportunity of exploiting colonial peoples—as if there could be any "justice" in the whole colonial system? How many are anxiously considering the "equitable national claims" of the German minority in Czecho-Slovakia—who have three Ministers in the Government, equal representation in the Parliament, and full cultural and educational rights, while the Jewish minority is deprived of all rights in Germany, the Germans in South Tyrol are subjected to violent Italianisation, and the millions of Ukrainians are terrorised in Poland, not to mention the hundreds of millions of subject peoples without rights in the British Empire? How many are solemnly discussing the argument whether "concessions" to Hitler might not bring peace, when the practical experience of recent years shows that every concession to fascism strengthens the striking power of fascism, encourages new aggression and therefore weights the balance on the side of war.

WHERE this policy will lead, if it is allowed to be carried through, is certain. It means the extension of the already considerable scale of wars to general war. In what direction this further development of the war offensive will break, if there is no united resistance, depends on the world situation. Experience shows that the line of fascist aggression proceeds along the line of least resistance, from the lesser to the greater. For this reason, while the ultimate aim of fascism is directed against all socialism, democracy and the working-class movement, and therefore above all against the world fortress of socialism and peace, the Soviet Union, at the same time as for the colonial redivision of the world in favour of the fascist Powers, the order of development in the plan of attack depends on strategic considerations.

THE strength of the Soviet Union, which grows greater every month, alike technically in the economic sphere, in the military sphere, and politically with the new Socialist

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Constitution, the elections and the sharp and successful vigilance against all enemy penetration, has up to the present defeated and continues to defeat all the plans for the frontal attack on the Soviet Union as the first stage of new world war. But we should never for one moment forget that this remains the supreme aim of the world counter-revolution, in which the reactionary elements of all countries still hope to unite and resolve their contradictions. The consciousness of this aim behind all the preliminary manœuvres is expressed in the increased virulence of anti-Soviet propaganda all over the world, no less than in the recent open demand of the official Nazi organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, for the separation of the Ukraine, and in the open preparations of the Japanese press for anti-Soviet war. The possibility is by no means excluded in the near future that Japan may yet provoke a conflict in the hope of drawing in the world. We must never forget the words of Lenin :

> We are living, not merely in a State, but in a system of States, and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist States for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois States will be inevitable. (Lenin, Report of the Central Committee to the Eighth Party Congress, March 18, 1919.)

The tendency sometimes showing itself to-day, through confidence in the strength of the Soviet Union, to leave this basic consideration out of account is a dangerous tendency. A sharp turn in the situation may rapidly bring these issues to the front once again.

BUT it is true that the new character of the present world situation, no less than the growing strength of the Soviet Union, has profoundly transformed this issue in the present period. Where before the policy of the counter-revolution was primarily expressed in direct interventionist war on the Soviet Union, alongside partial support for the Soviet Union from the working class of other countries, we see now a far-reaching world movement of the counter-revolutionary forces to attack first the bases of the working-class movement and

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of democracy in the capitalist countries as a decisive preliminary stage for the battle to destroy socialism; and in this situation the world rôle of the Soviet Union stands out as the strongest ally and bulwark of the working class and the peoples in the capitalist countries, for democracy and peace. Fascism is still in the preliminary stages of preparing the ground for its world offensive, by wars on the weaker countries, colonial wars, building its circle of alliances, and seeking by bluff and blackmail to secure the maximum concessions in advance. It is in these outpost battles of the present period, in Spain and in China with direct fighting, over Czecho-Slovakia and Austria, the colonial question or the revision of the League of Nations in the diplomatic field, over the People's Front in France or the united working-class front and the possibility of defeating the National Government in Britain, that the decisive issue of future war is already being fought.

FOR this reason we said at the outset that we are now approaching the Great Divide of the international situation. This means, above all, in view of the present balance of world forces, the decision and orientation of British policy in the present world situation. Despite the continuous assistance to fascism, which had facilitated its advance, the new complications which have arisen as a consequence of the assistance given to Hitler and to Japan, through the now extending threats to British colonial interests, are such that the final alignment is not yet decided, but is the subject of sharp controversy, within the camp of the British ruling class and of the National Government. This is the turning point which gives the unequalled opportunity for a united and effective mass opposition, in the first place to influence the policy of the National Government, and finally, by defeating it, to transform the rôle of Britain in the world situation and thereby to transform the world situation.

THE realisation of this requires the unity of the democratic and peace forces in Britain, around the central leadership of the united Labour Movement, on the basis of a positive programme for peace, in place of the present extreme division of policies, partial support of the National

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Government, and practical impotence. The character of such a concrete programme is plainly indicated by the realities of the world situation. Generalities about collective security and support of the League, or rhetorical denunciations of the National Government without a positive alternative policy, will not in the present situation carry conviction or defeat its policy. The masses of the people are looking for a clear lead in this situation, for a concrete alternative policy for peace which can check the menace of extending fascist war. That programme can only be concretely expressed in the slogan, not yet officially adopted by the Labour Party, for unity of Britain with the Franco-Soviet Pact, for the Peace Pact of Britain, France and the Soviet Union, supporting the legal rights of Spanish Democracy against aggression, and drawing in the smaller European States threatened by fascism, which could immediately transform the situation in Europe and the world. The common sense of the position was brutally, but not inaccurately, stated by Bernard Shaw in his Message to the recent Congress of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union, when he gave as his advice to imperialists that

> not only on Communist principles, but on theirs (*i.e.*, of the imperialists)—in fact especially and pressingly of theirs—an alliance of the U.S.S.R. with the British Empire and France is the ace of trumps for our diplomatists. As long as we hold fast to the Franco-Russian combination, a European war is practically impossible. One need not be a Communist to grasp this. All that is necessary is not to be a born fool.

In fact the evidence to-day would indicate that such a combination could at present win the co-operation of the United States, as shown in Roosevelt's call of last October, since the experience of 1932 is being repeated in the pressure of the United States for co-operation and its frigid reception by the National Government.

BUT the successful fight for such a policy depends in reality on the strength of the mass movement in Britain, and not on imperialist calculations. The fight for peace cannot be separated from the fight on home issues. The first signs of awakening and of a turn to take up the fight against the

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National Government on the part of the Labour Party, shown in the campaign for Spain, the Attlee delegation to Spain, and now in the new campaigns for the Distressed Areas and over the Cost of Living, are objectively a step forward. But they are still only partial steps on isolated issues; they are not yet reaching to the mass of the workers or reflected in any general revival. This is shown, not only in the still stagnant character of electoral returns, but in the relative passivity in the industrial field. The decisive advance to a new stage depends on the realisation of working-class unity and the mobilisation of a real fight against the National Government in every sphere of its policy, including its arms policy, at the same time as against the employers in the economic field. The recent applause of the Labour Party organ for the War Minister of the National Government (" the country at large will applaud Mr. Hore Belisha's courage. . . . Well done, Mr. Hore Belisha ! "—*Daily Herald* editorial, December 3, 1937), shows that the old thinly veiled or even open co-operation still goes on. It is impossible to exaggerate the seriousness of this position, in view of the whole international situation. We need to rally every force to change it and to effect a real awakening of a united working-class fight in Britain and a united popular opposition to the National Government. Then, and then only, we can look to see in 1938 a transformation of the situation, not for the worse, but for the better.

R. P. D.

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BRITISH LABOUR and the World

BY ARTHUR HORNER

I HAVE RECENTLY had an experience which has caused me to see the situation in Britain through the eyes of people who are not in Britain. I went with the delegation of non-Communists to the Soviet Union and we met and had many discussions with members of other delegations, Socialists and non-Communists. I was shocked in these discussions at the attitude with which the British situation, British people and the British working class are regarded at the present moment. The Mineworkers' Federation delegation, comprising Joseph Jones and other people of that kind, engaged in discussions with Socialists of other countries such as Pena of Spain, leader of the Asturian miners, Socialists from France, Belgium and Mexico and it was a disgraceful thing from my point of view as a member of the British working class to find how helpless we were when the rôle of the National Government was being discussed.

A number of small instances illustrate the justness of the attitude of these comrades from the various other countries. We agreed in discussion with the Spanish representatives to invite them, as an M.F.G.B. delegation, to come to Britain as the guests of our Federation, when we would organise meetings which could be addressed by them, in order to assist the Spanish people. Pena was coming back through Stockholm, Brussels, Paris and Finland. All these countries were open to him, but when we sent a telegram to Ebby Edwards, to ask him to arrange for a viza to Britain, ours was the one country where these people were not permitted to enter.

In the discussions which were taking place between representatives of the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Soviet trade unions, the Vice-President of the I.F.T.U. was there, the Treasurer and the Secretary—French and Belgian; but the President—a British President—was not present at these discussions, for a reason which we all understand. And in the conversations between the various delegates, it was clear that the greatest fear as to the success of such discussions was the fear that Britain would sabotage the effort to obtain unity in international trade union affairs. In other words, in the eyes of people who look at us from outside, we have sunk into a position of which every decent member of the working class is bound to be ashamed. Formerly we used to be regarded as people who had some reputation before the workers of the world, as a people with some claims to

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advancement and to some measure of freedom, which was unusual as compared to other countries; but I can assure you that most of this has been lost. Britain occupies a disgraceful position in the eyes of other people and it is futile for the working class to expect to be relieved of a measure of responsibility for this position.

There is considerable alarm, and I feel it very deeply, about the result of the municipal elections. Not merely because certain seats have not been captured, but because these results indicate the certainty of a prolongation of the life of the National Government, and because they are an incitement to go to the country and to secure its return for a further period. And if the National Government were returned, as is likely, then it will not be content to pursue even its present reactionary policy. It will certainly pursue, and regard itself as having the right to pursue, a policy much more dangerous, much more reactionary even than the one it is pursuing at the present time. This is a danger not only for the people of Britain but for the people of the world.

What has been done to try to understand why it is that the Labour Movement failed to achieve results in the recent elections, having regard to the disgraceful rôle which the National Government is playing ? And I consider, and I remember Joseph Jones in a public speech in Moscow saying, that the explanation of this is that the Labour Movement has not had a policy which was fundamentally different from the policy which the National Government is pursuing. When a prominent leader of the Labour Movement, not of the left wing, but of the right wing, goes to the length of saying this, then the position is indeed very serious. There is no doubt that the attitude of the Labour Movement towards war, towards Spain and many other questions has been such that millions of workers, perhaps not exactly lose faith in the future of the Labour Movement, but become apathetic in their attitude towards it.

The hesitations within the Labour Party, the hesitations in the leadership as well as the policy of the Party have contributed, I am satisfied very evidently towards the results which we have seen in the recent elections. For this reason I consider that whilst we are fighting for unity, this unity must not be an uncritical unity. We must emphasise and state the consequences to the Labour Movement of the present policy. We have seen that the policy which the Labour Movement is pursuing in internal and international affairs is one that is not drawing the masses of the workers to the support of the Labour Party. But we cannot be indifferent to whether the National Government wins or loses. It is not merely a matter of whether we win certain seats in local bodies, not a matter even of securing a formal parliamentary majority. It is a matter of wresting from the hands of the reactionary forces the power which they are exercising to hurt all the people of the world. In a very clear critical way we need to prove concretely in exactly what manner the present Labour policy is hurting the Labour Movement,

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and therefore cannot avoid helping the National Government.

This is not the whole explanation, however. For reasons which many of us appreciate, large masses of the British people really believe that the National Government can save Britain from war, and from fascism. They believe that the National Government's policy is succeeding in keeping war from England, and is avoiding the danger of Fascism coming to this country. It is undoubtedly true that strata which ought to be allies of the working class are afraid of more energetic measures, because of their fear that more energy in the fight against reaction may generate more energy in the fight for fascism in the country. There is a widespread belief that a moderate policy with concessions to reaction will help to avoid the danger of war or at least will delay considerably the coming of war and the coming of Fascism. To miss this would be, I think, a serious mistake and one which would make it impossible for us to arrive at the proper conclusions.

The attitude that the National Government is rotten, that it is reactionary, may satisfy us; we must *prove* that the policy of the National Government is not fighting war, but leading to war. And the people of this country will do very much to avoid the menace and the danger of war coming upon them. There is ample material to prove not only that this policy of the National Government is a policy which is not preventing the coming of war, it is aggravating the danger of war because of its support of Fascism. It is necessary, therefore, to explain this position, to face the fact that thousands of people do believe that the National Government is a Government of peace and a barrier to Fascism.

Then again, the international obligation of the British working class to the workers in all parts of the world, is something we have allowed to lapse. Britain is based on the position of the most efficient organised working class in the world, Britain has pretended to be a country where some measure of freedom was possible—but the rôle of the British working class towards the workers of other countries is something which should be given its true value. The British working class both in international Trade Union affairs and the affairs between nations has obligations to the workers of other countries. And we should make, or try to make, the British working class proud that they have been regarded as a working class with special obligations towards the working class in other countries who are in greater difficulties.

With regard to the policy of the Government in its relations with the Fascist countries, it is not enough to say merely that Halifax has gone to Berlin. It is not enough to deal merely with it in a phrase or the condemnation of a single act. We ought to be able to show that this policy of retreat of the National Government before Fascism *is* retreat and the granting of concessions at the expense of others. There is the idea if we give something away belonging to Belgium or something belonging to Czechoslovakia, it is alright. We keep what we have. But with the giving of these things we don't pacify Fascism. It incites the

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Fascist appetite to greater demands than ever before. We must say to the British people that this giving of concessions at the expense of others, are not steps to satisfy the appetite of Fascism; it is a strengthening of Fascism to make demands upon the British people quicker than otherwise would be possible. This idea that the National Government is a defender of the true interests of the British people, is a legend, and it is time to destroy this legend. We must prove that the National Government is a danger to the true interests of the British people, that the interests of the British people are being sacrificed in order to satisfy and to serve a clique, working through the National Government.

Before the war, Tsarism was regarded as the definite enemy of everything which was progressive, as the bulwark upon which all reaction could rest. Twenty-five years later, it is Britain which is being regarded as the cover for everything which is reactionary. Britain is now regarded in a new way, as fulfilling the rôle in world affairs that previously the Tsar occupied. I am sure that if our people could be made to understand the shame of it, that we are in disgrace in the eyes of the world, because this National Government is doing the things it is doing, that there a tremendous reaction could be made against them.

We have spoken about Halifax going to Berlin. It is not only shameful that Halifax meets the Fascists; we should make the British people feel it is disgraceful that a representative of Britain goes to Berlin in order to win some favour from these reactionary brutes who rule Germany. It is not necessary when we are discussing the Spanish or Chinese questions that Britain should claim to be the policeman of the world; but it is necessary that Britain shall cease to be an instrument in the hands of reaction. We do not have to argue that we should go to war for Spain, but we are entitled to say that no help shall go to Franco.

I remember being in Paris about four months ago, and I saw there the red flag with the tri-colour in the corner. That is to say, they had achieved a position where the revolutionary movement of France has now become the defender of the true interests of France.

They have established in the minds of the people, of millions of people, that those who have hitherto held themselves forward as the true defenders of the country, are the betrayers of their country; and we can do the same thing here.

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THESE ENEMIES of the People

BY FRANK PITCAIRN

BY LATE NOVEMBER it was known for certain in London and Paris that among the reasons for the resignation of Dr. Hjalmar Schacht from the German Ministry of Economics was an unsuccessful attempt made by him to reduce official expenditure upon Nazi " activities " abroad. Although the fact was not very generally drawn to the attention of the British public, its implications were of singular importance. Dr. Schacht, in the interests of a short-term economy drive—probably conceived partly with the purpose of interesting London capital in German possibilities—had succeeded in one economy move and failed in two. He did cut down Civil Service expenditure. He failed to cut down military expenditure and failed to cut down expenditure on " activities abroad."

The point is that he regarded both of these potential " cuts " as more or less equally essential to the success of his campaign. It does not appear that any secret was made of the fact that the expenditure on foreign activities has been and is on a scale which made it an item in the total budget comparable with—though certainly less than—the Army estimates. If there were no other evidence at all of the character and extent of such activities conducted by the German Government in other countries, the discussions with Dr. Schacht of which the purport is fairly well-known in the city of London would at once suggest the following conclusion, namely, that we are here dealing with a political phenomenon which, though it has its similarities with methods employed by many imperialist states in the past, is nevertheless by reason of its vastness and its field of action a new phenomenon in world politics.

The fact is, of course, that other evidence is indeed disastrously plentiful. " The wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Katmandhu " and the wildest dreams of the author of *The Power House* or of Mr. Oppenheim are very small beer beside the grim and proven facts of the operations of the foreign department of the Gestapo and of its corresponding organisation in Rome. In the history of imperialism similar methods have been in use by all imperialist powers in the subjugation of new territories, and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It has been left to the fascist governments of Rome and Berlin to transfer such operations to the European field, with a correspondingly vital change in their general character and significance.

The methods sketched in the Nazi documents seized at Barcelona in

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July, 1936 (afterwards published in England under the title " The Nazi Conspiracy in Spain "), and revealed in much greater detail by the discoveries of the French police during the past few weeks are not merely an adjunct of fascist policy: they are an instrument of policy having equal " status " so to speak—and a corresponding budgetary importance—with war itself. The employment of this instrument of policy is intensified month by month. The conspiracy of the " Hooded Men " reveals it at what is probably its highest point of development to date.

Merely to list the separate discoveries of hidden stores of German and Italian arms, the persons directly and indirectly implicated, the strategic positions prepared, the routes taken by different consignments of arms, the actual outbreaks of " preparatory " terrorism which have now come to light, would occupy several pages of this paper. What is at the moment important is to notice the particular characteristics of the conspiracy and of the discoveries made to date—particularly in view of their similarity with the characteristic phenomena of the conspiracy which preceded, prepared and provoked the fascist attack against the people of Spain.

(1) By comparing the latest arms discoveries with previous partial reports of the movement of illicit arms in France, it has been possible to establish the fact that the conspiracy had been in existence on a large and potentially " effective " scale at least since August of 1935. The fact is important because it indicates that it is a part of the policy to establish the necessary machinery with a view to using it at any moment when the international situation may demand it.

(2) It was apparently found preferable to import the greater proportion of the arms (for the most part German machine guns, Italian rifles, and high explosive manufactured by a German chemist under an Italian patent leased to Germany) rather than to attempt to steal them from the French arsenals and military supplies. For this there are two good reasons: the strength of loyal and patriotic anti-fascism in the French Army which would have made large scale theft of this kind particularly dangerous, and secondly the fact that by keeping a virtual monopoly of the arms deliveries it is possible for the supplying Governments to keep an absolutely firm hand on the direction of the policy of the fascist groups through whom they operate " within the gates." (In this connection it is worth recalling that in Britain there was recently some severe internal trouble within a certain fascist organisation precisely because it was felt by the German financial backers that the British financial backers were securing too large a voice in the direction of policy). Naturally, huge sums of money were contributed to the Hooded Men's conspiracy by French fascists—notably the friends of M. Tardieu and the Duc Pozzo di Borgo—but the arms supply remained a virtual monopoly of the enemy Governments.

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(3) The character of some of the " defence works " established by the conspirators immediately suggested that the organisation was in existence with a view not only to the creation of spasmodic terrorist outbreaks, nor with the certainty of a swift " putsch " (such as had certainly been expected in Spain), but on the assumption of a prolonged struggle.

(4) The conspiracy of course depended for its hopes of success on the treacherous and violent action against the French people and the Government of the People's Front of reactionary elements acting in the treacherous and bloody tradition of the aristocrats during the French revolution, the enemies of the Commune over eighty years later, the Hungarian aristocrats in 1919, the Russian Whites during the War of Intervention, and—most recently of all—the Spanish reactionaries under the treacherous leadership of General Franco in 1936.

It is noteworthy that all the enemies of the people, all the enemies of democracy and of peace, and hence in fact all the enemies of the Soviet Union, were deep in the affair—from the reactionary elements of the Army and Navy high Command, to Tardieu, to Laval, to Doriot. It was of course perfectly logical that the men who—like Doriot—had worked so hard on behalf of German fascist backers in the open campaign against the Soviet Union and the barrier to aggression formed by the Franco-Soviet Pact, should have worked equally hard underground against the People's Front Government on behalf of the foreign enemy.

Though the traditional treachery of big capitalists and their hangers-on, and their readiness to call in foreign invasion against their own people rather than see their own privileges and capacity for exploitation reduced, has, one would have thought, been sufficiently demonstrated in modern capitalist history, there are still people who do not altogether grasp the implications of the fact. Particularly it is perhaps not yet fully grasped that with the development of the military strength and the war preparations of the fascist governments, together with the violent sharpening of the internal contradictions of all the capitalist states, fascist and non-fascist, this is a phenomenon which is increasing very much in political importance. For now, to a degree never hitherto existing, the most reactionary elements of capitalism in the remaining democratic countries see in Berlin and in Rome, sources of power against their own people which they are very ready indeed to use.

It is the reproduction in a slightly different sphere of something with which everyone is already quite familiar in another and more open phase of international politics. For it is—for example—obvious to everyone that the interests of the British people and of peace would be best served by the open entry of Britain into an overwhelmingly strong alliance for peace against aggression with France, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia; an alliance which would certainly secure the co-operation of the United States. Instead of this—for equally

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evident reasons—the National Government of Great Britain rejects this possibility : a betrayal not really very far removed from that committed by people who run anti-popular papers with German money, and arm themselves against their own people with German arms.

There are other aspects of the conspiracy of the " Hooded Men " of particular international interest. In this connection it will be desirable perhaps to illuminate the matter with a concrete example of the operation of a section of this international conspiracy. In the early summer of 1936 preparations for the outbreak of the Spanish war were well advanced. It was of course foreseen that there would be a huge and perhaps overwhelming demand in France for the continuance of full commercial relations—as established by international law—with the Republican Government already scheduled as the victim of the Fascist attack. It was at this moment that the following phenomena produced themselves more or less simultaneously :

A vigorous fascist attempt was made to produce in France by well-organised provocations, a " state of disorder." At the same time there was started in Britain an almost incredible right wing press campaign suggesting that the " state of disorder " which the provocateurs were unable to produce in fact, really had broken out.

While this campaign was going on in the wilder, big circulation newspapers of the extreme right in England, there was set going, particularly in the circles controlling *The Times*, the suggestion that a " Bolshevik conspiracy " was about to break out in Spain, that France was weak and threatened with internal upheaval, and that a London-Berlin rapprochement (with the suggestion that to this " entente " a right wing French Government, divested of the Franco-Soviet Pact, would be admitted) was the only " safe " way out.

Significantly, the same personage who conducted this propaganda among the controllers of *The Times* simultaneously circulated a parallel line of propaganda through the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, whose columns seemed always open to reflect the identical desires of the Trotskyists and of the German Embassy. (On that occasion his typewriter ran so far away with him that he drew a strong and well-deserved counterblast from Dr. Hugh Dalton, who opined that open pro-Nazi and anti-soviet propaganda was not entirely what one ought to expect from the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Herald*).

The immediate purpose of all this was of course clear enough : it was on the one hand to embarrass the French Government internally in order to paralyse any possible action in Spain, and secondly, in view of the probable failure of this effort, to establish a powerful pressure from London which might have the same effect.

There is one word in which the whole of this aspect of the internal conspiracies operated by the German Government particularly in France may be summed up : Blackmail. It is not necessary for the internal attack to be fully launched in the " grand offensive " for the

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existence of the conspiracy to prove useful. Partial disorders can be embarrassing. If the Government and the people are strong enough and united enough to prevent even partial disorders, then the threat of disorders can be embarrassing. And if the Government and the people refuse to be blackmailed in this manner, then the suggestion abroad that the country is " internally torn with dissension " can be used—with the aid of a powerful propaganda machine—to affect the foreign relations of the country concerned.

In this connexion it is particularly notable that the *Voelkischer Beobachter*, leading Nazi organ, openly supported the " Hooded Men " after their conspiracy had been discovered, and declared that it was natural that large numbers of Frenchmen should now be compelled to organise and act illegally. This Nazi organ had the audacity at the same time to declare that whatever might happen in France, Germany would pursue a policy of " Non-Intervention "—a direct and brutally threatening advertisement to the French Government of the Nazi intention to employ in France the same methods of " non-intervention " which have sent literally millions of pounds worth of German arms and aeroplanes to Spain, and tens of thousands of German technicians.

The methods most fully revealed in the conspiracy of the " Hooded Men " are a very evident integral part of the policy expressed by the " Anti-Comintern Pact." From France to Czechoslovakia, to Brazil, to China, the members of the Pact pursue their policy of organising treachery, terrorism and armed attack on the people and the democratic leaders under the cynically false pretence of " suppressing communism." (Note that after the discovery of the Hooded Men, the Italian press and Lord Rothermere's *Evening News* were unanimous in the attempt to pretend—even at that belated hour—that the conspiracy was really a " red " conspiracy which the wicked People's Front Government was trying somehow to present as a conspiracy of the Right).

The internal defence of every democratic people against the attack of the German and Italian money, the German and Italian arms, and the home-grown allies of the enemy, depends upon the development of a People's Front based—as it can only be based—on the united action of the working class parties. Mutual assistance between the threatened peoples depends upon the vigour with which, in the present case, the democratic forces of Britain, with the Labour Party at their head, can express and make practical their sympathy with the people of France, despite the unholy alliance existing between the principal forces in and around the National Government and the warmakers in Berlin and Rome.

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20 YEARS AFTER: Seeing Socialism

BY TOM MANN

I WAS VERY GLAD to be an invited guest of the Central Council of the Soviet Trade Unions, to visit the Soviet Union and take part in the 20th Anniversary Celebrations in Moscow. With Ben Tillett, my comrade in arms of 48 years ago and on numberless occasions, I was invited to join up with the British delegation under the auspices of the Friends of the Soviet Union, and did so, leaving London for Leningrad on October 30, 1937. On board the vessel, also bound for Moscow, were the two South African delegates, one of them being W. H. Andrews, my old friend and Trade Union colleague of many years standing.

It might be interesting to give an account of the earnestness and concern shewn by each of the delegates, American and British, to fraternise with each other and hold conversations on set subjects during the voyage, to get close acquaintance with the problems of chief interest, but this would take too much space. At Bremerhaven we took on board the crew of the Soviet ship Komsomol, which was sunk by a Franco warship, the crew being saved but imprisoned. These were Russians of course, so that plus the Spanish delegation of about fifteen and the others previously mentioned, we made an interesting contingent.

We duly arrived at Leningrad on Friday, November 5, travelling the same night to Moscow, reaching there Saturday morning. With suitable meetings of welcome we were ready on Sunday the 7th for the great celebration in the Red Square. Over a period of many years in the Movement, in many countries, I have seen many demonstrations; but never, not even in Russia, had I seen anything approaching this magnificent celebration of efficiency in all departments. Of necessity, the Red Army was there, in many thousands. The great march past was extremely impressive, every section of the fighting forces in full equipment telling of millions of others, ready on the instant to spring to the defence of the Fatherland.

We watched with keen interest and highest admiration the marching workers of both sexes, with banners and emblems, beautiful and numberless. Officers of the Army, Navy, Aviation, industrial toilers of all occupations, with hundreds of bands, and hundreds of thousands of streamers, banners, bannerets, flags and other exhibits, were marching. After six hours on end of this, our eyes and legs felt the necessity for relaxation, but we had to be ready again for six in the

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evening to continue without any break till one in the morning.

Space will not admit of further descriptive matter as I am anxious to deal with what I consider by far the most vital questions affecting the workers of the whole world. It is not sufficient to be able to declare and to prove that the standard of life of a whole people is higher than formerly; it is not enough that education is certainly higher and better than before; nor is it sufficient that it can be proved beyond doubt that material betterment is the universal characteristic. All these things may be, and yet, if there is lacking a planned system of the production of all life's essentials, in such abundance and in such manner, on a basis of assured distribution of these essentials that they shall reach all, not just for long spells but for *all* the time, with no fear of economic crisis, and therefore no fear of spells of unemployment, there is no economic security for the people. Planned production on a co-operative basis; producing for use and not for profit—this, and nothing less than this, is fundamental for the continuous well-being of a whole people: and this they assuredly have in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

We had opportunities of speaking with workers in a quiet and private fashion, carefully returning again and again to the same point until we were clear. We had similar chances of submitting any questions to officials and getting replies, and made use of these opportunities. When we were not clear as to the control of the workers in factories and shops we were directed to the Factory Committees. The Factory Committees are very real functioning agencies. The Trade Unions are indeed the controllers of industry, working in conjunction with all the agencies for ensuring the highest economic efficiency and the building up of the Socialist State. In no other country on earth is there economic security, nor can there be on a basis of profit trading. Production for profit must repeatedly destroy attempts at stabilising industry and so leave people in idleness.

If we know these things, why dare we not declare in favour of applying such principles in this country? Are we to go on for ever tolerating and excusing the systematic legalised robbery we see being carried on by the capitalist exploiters? Trade Unionists, we know the real causes of economic crises; do not let us be fearful to play the man and determine to act upon that knowledge. Upon the Trade Union Movement of this country rests a great and serious responsibility. To the millions of sufferers employed and unemployed we are in duty bound to make it known, nation-wide poverty can be cured; industry can be stabilised, but not under capitalism. Universal co-operative ownership of the means of life and the co-operative principle of production for the well-being of all, guarantees the abolition of poverty and with it the meanness of life, its accompanyment.

I am proud and privileged indeed to have seen the realisation of planned production in so vast a country as the Soviet Union, with a population of one hundred and eighty millions of people. For this

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glorious example they are showing to the world, let those of us who rejoice over it because of the hope it holds up to all peoples, let us joyfully express our thanks. May they go on, as of course they will, from victory to further victories, always in the interests of the peoples of the world on the basis of SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.

Long live the Soviet Union! Long live the Workers Organisations of all countries. May OUR TRADE UNIONS SPEEDILY REALISE THE GLORIOUS WORK AWAITING TO BE DONE, AND DO IT!

Mighty Democracy

BY BEN TILLETT

RUSSIA IS HEADING for a mightier democracy than was ever conceived by the Utopians, for it unites altruism with utility in all its plannings for the future. The five year plans are but a definition of an instruction; what is behind it all, is the building up of a great democracy, built to meticulous detail in relationship of parts to the whole conception of equity in control and constitution.

Evolutionary constructiveness is built on family life, providing maternity with scientific and medical aid of the first class. First, the pregnant, future Mother is guarded with clinic and medical care, two months before accouchement she must not work—together with a two months after birth care. Her clinic aid means nursing, feeding, care of child, creche; and if returning to work, she has the factory creche of skilful nursing to help her offspring, while she herself is assured of every help to efficient motherhood. This is a normal condition safeguarding the mother and child, and there is no " Nosey Parkerism "; the mother as such is reverenced. Medical care follows mother and bairn up to the creche and the kindergarten period, where physical and mental training is gently evolutionary to the child and juvenile schooling.

All this time the matter of home-life, feeding and care, is still followed up by the State authorities. Then there is the most practical of schooling undertaken, and technical training, cultural education follows in efficient manner. Technical, industrial, scientific and cultural education of every quality and degree is encouraged by every aid and form of maintenance by the State schemes of advancement in learning and practical industrial science. There being no class except merit, every position in the state and society is open to all—with proficiency encouraged by the anxious and alert administration in every scope and area. Manhood comes with health and courage improved to manifest

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quality; this applies also to women, who have equal opportunity of cultural development in every grade and qualification of social life and administration. This is a positive claim, and I challenge any sane critic to compare our own methods of care to Mother, child, youth or manhood in this, our own country, without blushing for the ruthless disregard of child life and motherhood in Britain.

There is no unemployment in Russia, no beggars, no professional prostitution, no starvation. This miracle has only taken twenty years for Russia, risen from mediæval condition to attain the complete security of her citizens in economic and political equity for all. She is now the second manufacturing state of the world, the first agricultural producer in the world, and that in twenty years. She could absorb an equal number to our unemployed, families and all, without trouble. There are no capitalists, no profits by a system of robbery ; her surplus values go into every reconstruction and modernity of industrialism, social life, auxilliary aid for pensions, schools, colleges, social institutes from babyhood to maturity and all that recreational resources can evolve. Medical aid, on a thorough and scientific plan, is vouchsafed to everyone needing health care. Rest homes, hospitals, health and recreative holiday homes are provided. Cinemas, theatres, restaurants, sports of every kind, administered mostly by factory committees (on the spot) who contribute aid together with the state-funds representatives, making the whole procedure a democratic control on all counts. The total amount contributed approaches nearly to the set amount of wages paid.

The Standard-of-Living has increased more than 300 *per cent. since* 1914—*a very modest estimate. Compare this to our own!*

My duty is to prove that domestically the Soviet Union has wrought revolutions in the conditions of living, and that within twenty years; a jump from serfdom to free citizenship in the latter period. Every man and woman of adult age, of any race, language or colour, is a free citizen, and also free from the parasitism of capital, the speculator, the stock exchanges, the banks, the mongers of interest—he is really working for sheer utility purposes of social life. Neither fascism or international financiers can seize surplus values, or compel labour to work for profit for the parasite. I knew Russia within the last two generations as a servile state for the workers; I find her now a powerful, if not the most powerful State in the world—governed by a Soviet proletariat. I offer these considerations to the workers of our old brave country.

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FOOD PRICE RAMP
How to Beat It

BY W. H. WILLIAMS
and MARGOT C. HEINEMANN

THE PRESENT RISE in retail prices, especially of food products, is one of the main issues before the working class movement in Britain to-day. The campaign against rising prices has now assumed proportions of a nation-wide agitation which, of course, expresses the growing resentment of hundreds of thousands of workers, many of whom are finding that the increases in money wages which have been secured, have brought no real improvement in their condiions.

An examination of the chief factors which have caused the rise is, therefore, of special importance to the Labour movement.

Government spokesmen argue that the rise in prices is entirely due to economic recovery. Thus, Mr. Oliver Stanley, President of the Board of Trade, recently declared that " The rise reflects a recovery from the conditions in a period of depression." This broad generalisation is a typical example of a statement which conceals more than it reveals. For in fact the increase in the cost of living is the result of the operation of other factors, which, while they are implied in Mr. Stanley's " recovery from the conditions in a period of depression," for very good reasons they are overlooked.

To a certain extent, Mr. Stanley and those whom he represents have succeeded in putting across " recovery " as the prime cause of rising prices. For this reason it is pertinent to remark that the cost of living does not necessarily rise as production increases; thus, during the last period of recovery from depression in Britain, that is, from 1924 to 1929, there was a rise in industrial production of 11½ per cent., but at the same time, a fall in the cost of living of 6¼ per cent. Moreover, in the United States of America, between 1923 and 1929, there was an important growth in the volume of goods manufactured, but at the height of the boom the cost of living was exactly the same as in the year 1923.

What then are the reasons for the present rise in prices which are deliberately left out of the speeches of the President of the Board of Trade and his colleagues in the Government and business circles. They are :

(1) The artificial restriction of production and the *means of production* during the depression;

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(2) Government interference with the home production of foodstuffs and with imports from abroad, and

(3) Monopoly profiteering, which has been enormously increased as a result of the operation of the first two, both of which are main planks in the Government's economic policy.

There is a fourth cause for the price rise, which is also attributable to Government policy, and that is rearmament, the effect of which has been dealt with in previous articles in the LABOUR MONTHLY. It will suffice to point out that as a result of the heavy demand for certain heavy raw materials which have been diverted from industries engaged in the production of goods for domestic consumption, there has been a rise in prices for domestic goods. Increased taxation for revenue purposes made necessary by the colossal arms programme is also a factor in the increased prices for domestic goods.

The Government's way out of the 1931 crisis is well known. Like that of all capitalist governments at that time, its main policy was to restore profitability by the dual process of cutting wages and the introduction of measures of restriction with the object of forcing up prices. This was a whole period of unheard-of destruction of essential foodstuffs—oranges were thrown into the sea, wheat and coffee burned, pigs slaughtered—in a desperate effort to restrict supplies and raise prices. Not only the product, but the actual means of production were also laid to waste. Bonuses were paid for the reduction of acreage, and even the intensive use of fertilisers was forbidden under penalty of fines.

Indeed, between 1931 and 1934 much of the most effective propaganda of the Labour Movement was concerned with this physical destruction, and the creation of poverty in the midst of plenty. This was thought of as purely a slump phenomenon, and when the period of recovery came, bringing with it new problems for the Labour Movement, actual physical destruction was no longer so obvious. Hence there has been a tendency to look for altogether new and different causes for the present price rise. The policy of restricting production naturally went on more slowly in agriculture than in industry, owing to the long production period for most crops and the small-scale nature of farming by comparison with industry. Nevertheless, eventually it took effect in a startling degree and the full results are now becoming evident.

The policy of restriction was carried out on a world-wide scale. Thus the world Wheat Agreement signed in August, 1933, by European wheat producers, limited their exports, hence their output, to 50 million bushels in the following two years, as against an 80 million bushel export in 1931-32. Other countries followed suit. It is not surprising, therefore, that between 1932-33 and 1936-37, world wheat stocks fell from 588 million bushels to 125 million bushels. World wheat prices rose from 6s. per cwt. in 1935 to 10s. per cwt. in September, 1937. The effect was similar for tea, coffee and a number of other

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commodities which are affected by artificial restriction schemes.

In many cases these restriction schemes have been carried into the boom period, with the object of increasing profits still further. For example tea was restricted to 82½ per cent. by the international government quota in 1932, when growers were suffering from low prices; up to December, 1937, it was still restricted to 87½ per cent. and is now only 92 per cent. of peak output. Moreover, the quota may be reduced again at any time if prices show a tendency to fall. This has just happened in the case of tin; when the artificially high price, induced by rearmament speculation, began to fall, the International Committee slashed the output quota from 110 per cent. to 70 per cent. of peak production (December, 1937). Thus even at the height of the present recovery capitalism can no longer allow the full use of its productive resources.

Superimposed on this international policy of restriction is Government interference in agriculture. It is a common-place in speeches that the Marketing Boards represent the interests of the big Combines, and it is not difficult to show the contrast between the fortunes of the farmers and the big firms who have exploited them during the last few years. But the actual process by which this still takes place is still insufficiently understood, since it varies for different Boards. The Milk scheme is probably the most notorious.

The Milk Marketing Scheme came into operation in October, 1933, as part of the Government's general agricultural policy. No producer can sell milk unless he is registered, and he must sell under conditions laid down by the Board. Produce retailers are specially licensed. The Board fixes both wholesale and retail prices, and under the scheme no retailer may sell below the Board's minimum price. One would imagine that this would be advantageous to the milk farmer in that he is guaranteed a sale for all the milk he produces, and to the distributor who is supposed to be safe-guarded against price-cutting.

The scheme has actually brought quite different results. In the first place, after four years of operation of the scheme the League of Nations Committee on Nutrition shows that this country has the highest milk prices in Europe and consumption per head is one of the lowest. Therefore both the farmer and small distributor are suffering from the inability of the public to consume more milk, because the retail price of milk under the Board's policy continues to rise.

How does this curious situation come about? In a very simple manner. There are two wholesale milk prices, one for liquid milk and another for manufacturing milk. The manufacturers purchase milk below cost price, under the scheme, the balance being met out of the price charged for liquid milk. The farmer, however, receives an average price based on the total liquid and manufacturing sales. For example, in 1936, the average price of wholesale liquid milk was 1s. 3.91d. per gallon; the average manufacturing price was 5.39d. The " pool " price (the average

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of both) which the farmer actually received has actually not risen at all with the price of liquid milk.

Who then benefits from this arrangement? It is obvious that this system is highly profitable to those big combines, such as United Dairies and Express Dairy which use milk for manufacturing purposes. The proportion of milk sold for manufacture has risen from 27 per cent. in 1934 to 38 per cent. in 1936, so that the burden on the consumer is constantly increasing. For example, in many areas summer prices for milk no longer exist; for when milk is plentiful more is sold as "surplus" for manufacturing purposes at a loss, and the cost has to be borne out of liquid prices. The difficulty was dealt with by the Milk Reorganisation Committee reporting in 1936:

> "It became obvious that it would not have been necessary to raise liquid milk prices to their present level but for the loss on the surplus."

Again, the Food Council in the report for 1936 say:

> "We foresaw the danger that higher prices for liquid milk, by encouraging production and diminishing consumption, might tend to depress the (pool) prices actually received by producers, because of the increased quantity of milk sold for manufacture at reduced rates."

Indeed, at the present time farmers are finding that increased production simply means lowering pool prices and are decreasing production as feeding stuff prices rise. The *Daily Herald* (September 15, 1937) states that since December, 1936, the supply month by month has been lower than in the corresponding period of last year.

But the scheme strengthens the position of the big combines. United Dairies, the biggest single unit, to-day controls not only some 700 shops, but also 40 condenseries and creameries, as well as dairy machines and manufacturing plant. The increased influence of United Dairies is shown by the fact that between 1932 and 1936 the combine increased the quantity of milk handled annually by no less than 30 million gallons.

The quantitative restriction of the imports of condensed and processed milk, imposed by the government as part of its milk policy, has resulted in the lowering of imports of sweetened skimmed condensed milk from 2,139,000 cwts. in 1932 to 1,363,000 cwts. in 1936. This has enabled United Dairies to expand the processing business, and in his address to the shareholders in 1934, Mr. Maggs, the chairman of United Dairies, was able to say that:

> "Encouraged by the practical steps taken by Mr. Elliott to restrict imports of foreign processed milk we have greatly increased our manufacturing plant."

At this same meeting Mr. Maggs was able to indicate that in other ways the combine was strengthened by the government's milk scheme.

> "The operations of the Milk Marketing Board have resulted in

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the elimination of some of the " pirates " (i.e., those retailers who attempt to undersell United Dairies).

The Milk Marketing Board has adopted a policy which

(1) Raises the price of liquid milk.
(2) Restricts consumption of liquid milk.
(3) Reduces the farmer's share of the total retail price of milk.
(4) Eliminates the small retailer.
(5) Strengthens the grip of the big monopoly groups.

Although the machinery is somewhat different in the case of bacon, the introduction of marketing boards has resulted in (1) higher retail prices (2) relatively lower prices for the actual producer of bacon pigs, and (3) the increased power of the big monopoly middlemen (in this case the bacon curers) who have secured a higher price for the bacon which they handle at the expense of the farmer and the consumer.

As in the case of milk, the introduction of import restrictions by the Government has enabled the influential bacon curers to acquire a monopoly position in the industry. Since 1933, imports of bacon have been restricted, the object being to stabilise British production at a certain level and thus raise prices. Under the import restriction imports of cheap Danish bacon have been reduced from 9.9 million cwts. in 1932 to 5.3 million cwts. in 1936. The retail price of streaky bacon has risen from 10d. per lb. in November, 1932, to 1s. 3½d. in November, 1937. The farmer, however, gets less than he did before the scheme was introduced. In 1930 the farmer got 16s. 6d. per score for a bacon pig, where to-day he gets 11s. 5d., a drop of 30 per cent: wholesale bacon prices have only fallen by 24 per cent.

The position of the bacon curers, the biggest being the group of firms ranged around Marsh and Baxter, is strengthened by the system of licences to all curers instituted by the Bacon Development Board, one of the three Boards introduced for the bacon industry under the Agricultural Marketing Act. The Government's declared policy is to reduce costs by " rationalisation " and cutting down the number of factories. Therefore, under the scheme anyone desiring to start or extend a bacon factory must apply for a licence. Up to September, 1936, five licences have been granted and 27 refused. From 1938 onwards the Board is to have powers to close down redundant or inefficient factories by refusing to renew their licences. Another feature of the scheme is that each curer is allocated a quota for bacon sales which is fixed on the basis of their average 1933-35 production. The effect of these arrangements is (1) to drive out as redundant the small curers (many of them butchers or farmers curing for a small local trade) (2) to prevent the extension of co-operative curing, and (3) the creation of an effective weapon of the big combines against their competitors. A further scandal of the operation of bacon board is that despite repeated requests of the pig-farmers and the Food Council the Board has no power to enquire into the costs and profits of the bacon curers who are in the

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main private concerns who are not obliged to publish balance sheets.

It will be seen from these two examples that the precise method of exploitation varies from one Board to another. It is interesting to note that the Millers' Mutual Association, a voluntary organisation set up in 1930 and now covering practically the whole milling industry outside of the Co-operatives, acts in a way very similar to the Bacon Development Board, fixing output quotas, closing redundant mills, etc., though here the control is voluntarily exercised by the big combines in their own interest. Dividends have risen from a moderate level to 15 per cent. (Spillers') and 18 per cent. (Ranks') under this scheme.

Faced with the corruption of the present Boards and the rise in retail prices which they help to cause, the tendency of the movement in the past has been to demand complete abolition, both of the Boards and of agricultural subsidies. This policy, however, needs to be reviewed, for the enemy is not any piece of machinery in the abstract, but the class interest which it is made to serve; and to eliminate the Boards would not eliminate the conflict between combine and consumer on the one hand, and between combine and producer on the other.

The farmers under present day capitalism are in an extremely weak bargaining position. As small individual producers, paying heavy rents, owning little or no capital, and often labouring under a weight of mortgages and debts, they have to deal in buying and selling with great monopoly combines, which substantially control the market and which command millions of pounds in reserves. The farmer is completely dependent on the combine, while the combine is independent of any particular farmer. Thus the situation arises that poor prices are paid for agricultural products, while the prices of such essentials as artificial fertilisers (chiefly controlled by I.C.I.) and feeding-stuffs (chiefly controlled by Spillers' and Unilever) are at a high level. This explains the fact that while retail prices of agricultural produce are rising, and the profits of the big millers, curers and milk combines are increasing, workers continue to drift away from the land and thousands more acres go out of cultivation every year.

In spite of formal " equality " in the number of seats allocated to farmers and distributors interests on the various boards, the fact is that in their present form the Boards tend to strengthen the control of big capital in the industry; they are the further expression of a control which has been growing up within the economic system, and which at a given stage is recognised and fostered by the State. Nevertheless, their existence is founded on a natural farmers' demand for stable prices for agricultural products. If this could be assured on the basis of an expanding market (which is only possible if middlemen's profits are attacked and prices thus reduced), there would be an incentive to bring back land into cultivation, and to improve existing agricultural methods in order to produce more cheaply. But the Boards' policy of controlling and restricting output, increasing distributors' margins, and

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raising retail prices is bound to have exactly the opposite effect.

The contract under the Board is still, in essence, a " free " contract—of the same type as the " free " bargain made between the proletarian cut off from the means of production, and the employer, owning the means of production. The Government has done nothing to interfere with the " freedom " of this contract, or to bring it nearer to any standard of justice, despite the fact that it enforces the contract by law once it is made.

The results are clearly shown in examples like the following: In debate on the Government's new long-term policy for the Milk Industry, the question of the subsidy to ensure a minimum price for manufacturing milk was raised.

> *Mr. W. Roberts:* " Surely under this price insurance scheme there must be some minimum price which will be guaranteed ? " (to the farmer).
>
> *Mr. Morrison:* " As I have said, the price of manufactured milk depends in the first place on the price which the Milk Board is able to exact from the manufacturers. Therefore the minimum price will be affected by that also."

Thus the excessively low price of manufacturing milk, for which the children have to suffer, is the result of blackmail by the manufacturers.

The contract for bacon, again, is a contract between the farmers with pigs to sell (represented by the Pig Marketing Board) and the curers who buy them (represented by the Bacon Marketing Board). The pig prices fixed in the contract for 1937 were so unfavourable to the farmers, in view of the rapid rise in the cost of feeding stuffs, that they did not contract for enough pigs to make the scheme workable, preferring the uncertainties of the open market. This brings out very clearly the fact that mere machinery for price-fixing, in this instance, does nothing to lessen the exploitation of the farmers by the combine; for both the margin taken by the curers, and the actual power of the monopolists in curing have increased under the scheme and as a direct result of it.

The first action of the labour movement in face of the rising cost of living must of course be to press for increased wages and allowances, together with extension of cheap or free food supplies under the social services at wholesale prices.* This would create a permanent improvement in the standard of living and therefore a permanently increased market for agricultural produce.

But it is not enough to fight rising prices by demanding an increase in nominal wages, unless at the same time we fight to prevent the extra money going to the profiteers in the food industry. General petitions asking the Government to take action with regard to the high cost of

*It is estimated in the latest P.E.P. report on Health Services that an additional subsidy of £2,000,000 (approximately) would enable 100 million gallons of milk, or one-third of the present surplus, to be diverted from manufacture to mothers and children at ½d. a half-pint.

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living may help to arouse indignation, but there is a serious lack at present of a clear and realistic food policy for the Labour movement; hence the ineffectiveness of the few existing workers' representatives on the Food Council. There is a real danger that the movement may fall in with the Government's general line (now being pushed through the Food Council) of "rationalising" by driving out the small man, thus cutting itself off from the hundreds of thousands of small shopkeepers, farmers, curers, etc., and playing straight into the hands of the monopolists, whose policy is always to try and drive a wedge between the workers and these sections. Indeed, statements by certain individuals in connection with the present Labour Party campaign against high prices suggest that this process has already begun.

The following proposals for dealing with the Boards' policy are put forward tentatively for discussion:

(1) We oppose all schemes of output restriction (e.g., tea internationally, potatoes nationally) because in relation to the workers' needs there is a shortage of essential foodstuffs.

(2) We oppose compulsory "margins" for middlemen (as in the milk scheme), but support stable guaranteed prices to farmers for agricultural products, based on the costs of production. As far as possible prices should be stabilised without recourse to a subsidy from the taxpayer, by special levies on profits of (e.g.) millers and curers on the one hand, and (e.g.) suppliers of feeding stuffs and fertilisers on the other.

(3) We are against all marketing schemes where a "bargain" is driven between organised and monopolist middlemen, manufacturers, etc., with big capital reserves and a number of small-scale disorganised and debt-ridden producers. Where contracts are involved their terms should be drawn up by Parliament and re-examined at regular intervals with reference to the profits made by both parties, and to the level of retail prices.

(4) Even under capitalism there would be a good case for regarding food distribution as a public utility, on which profits would be limited by law (on the same principle as gas and electricity). The control of rents for arable land would reduce the prices of all agricultural products.

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SOVIET STAGE
1917 - 1937

BY HUNTLEY CARTER

ENTIRELY THE OPPOSITE of the High Finance Capital theatre in all countries outside the Soviet Union: entirely for the Soviet people, 170,000,000 and more: entirely for Soviet Socialism: entirely owned and controlled by the workers (a term here including proletariat, peasants, red army and nationalities within the Soviet Union). Such is the Soviet theatre to-day. And as such was it conceived and born twenty years ago and has grown up side by side with a great nation in the making, a vast community of workers, as an organic part of them, reflecting their life and labour, epitomising in epic form the creative ideas and hurricane events that from Revolution to New Constitution have offered themselves for dramatisation within its comparative limits. It has fought for the Revolution with the workers, struggled with them to overcome Interventionist, Civil Warmonger and Counter revolutionary. It has followed, reflected and interpreted the great construction effort through unparalleled periods of economic ruin and recovery, industrial, agrarian, cultural and constitutional revolutions. No matter what deep shadow the predominance of the old Tsarist academic elements, the professionals who accepted the Revolution in fact but not in spirit, may have cast over the substance, the theatre has struggled with the workers, who with its aid have come to demonstrate, indeed to prove, that they possess a tremendous reservoir of art and dramatic potentialities and power of expression which alone without other mighty forces within the Union is calculated to form a basis for universal peace.

So, a new, vital and inspiring theatre has arisen. A theatre to all intent and purpose proletarian and democratic, one that is at the service of an entire population, has emerged from the storm and stress of a colossal social revolution. It came as the first of its kind in history. It stands to-day as the embodiment of the world's greatest theatre. The Soviet theatre is the Soviet's cultural masterpiece.

What are the facts, briefly told, of the unique theatre the Soviet workers have built. The tree analogy best describes them. The theatre is, as the theatre should be, a spontaneous growth in a vast community released by the revolution to its own art and dramatic impulse and initiation. Its seeds were sown during the long and thrilling age of revolution. Of these the most important and lasting were the basic views of Marx and Engels on dramaturgy. They were opposed to

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formalism. They placed content first, and held that class-struggle is the proper content and, indeed, the essence of drama. " Dramatic content constitutes those great world-historical class struggles that determined the development of humanity." They also stressed the importance of socialist realism which has become the new Soviet theatre technical tradition that entirely differs from the outworn pre-war Stanislavski-Dantchenko realist tradition. Socialist realism is the realism of the whole, the whole of the new life and labour of the Soviet Socialist Union, and not the realism of a part, not " little photographs of non-essential transitory moments in the life of small communities or classes, presented without an understanding of things as a whole " as the serious pre-war Russian plays mostly were. Marx also condemned the dramatic falsification of history. These principles of non-formalism, class-struggle, socialist realism and historical truth are responsible for the great change that of late has come over the Soviet theatre, a change due to the removal of those gross defects from the theatre of the old reformist theorists who accepted the revolution without troubling to know what they were accepting. The roots and shoots of the Soviet theatre sprang from these and other historical seeds, and from the profound dramatic need of an entire community. In 1917 the world witnessed the amazing sight of the sudden rise of millions of workers, peasants and soldiers to an overwhelming dramatic expression of their own. Amid the ruins of the old world they discovered a new one and they set to work to immortalise this new world and themselves, the people in it, by composing an immense dramatic epic. Their first task was to unite the incipient social and theatre structures. In their hands the theatre became for the first time in history an organic part of the life of a new socialist nation. The early ideas and events influencing theatrical policy and other consequences are very numerous, but only a few can be mentioned here. The first move of the theatrical revolutionary march was made by the unorganised masses in clubs, cellars, circles, in streets and squares, before palace and bourse, wherever crowds of untrained actors could spontaneously reflect intuition, knowledge and events inviting immediate and most decisive action. Thus the theatre began to grow rapidly promoting new human relations, reflecting new conditions of life, the common tightening up, the principles and action of Marx. Then came the October Theatre period of this proletarian movement. Soldiers hot from the front brought the Civil War and Intervention to the stage and together with workers and peasants and converted stage directors, like Meyerhold, sketched in the epical outline of militant communism.

So to organisation. The theatrical activities of the Government and Soviet Councils came to life. Two main facts made for organisation. The first was Government and Soviet action. The second was proletarian and Trades Union action. The Government steps were, principally, freedom decrees, nationalisation (37 People's theatres)

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expropriation, collective organisation in the theatre (theatre soviets), the use of the theatre to organise the masses and the masses to organise themselves. Thus organised, theatrical power was conferred on the Workers. And cultural self-determination handed similar power to the nationalities. The Constitution of 1918 materially assisted this freedom movement in the theatre. " It assured the toilers real freedom to express their views and selves, not only in the press and theatre but elsewhere." Likewise the second Constitution in 1923, and the third in 1936 played their part in providing new ideas and new conditions of life and society and, in these, momentous national and socialist content for the proletarian theatre. Out of Government action in 1918 came four important lines : the proletarian and mass amateur theatre; the nationalities theatre; the Academic All-Union theatre (or teaching centres, the Maly, Bolshoi and two State theatres at Leningrad); and the reciprocity movement for bringing the Right and Left together in mutual help and understanding. Thus the Government was committed to active participation in the development of the four movements concerned. The result is seen in the theatrical unity and universalism of 1936-7.

Along with the Government organisation went the Workers (proletarian and T.U.s) organisation, also beginning in 1918. Throughout, the two latter groups have played a powerful part as a Left Wing in establishing T.U.s, revolutionary, workers and communist Youth theatres, in checking the back-slidings and excesses of the academic Right theatres, and in promoting the mass amateur movement generally. The T.U.s in particular have rendered enormous aid to this movement, have given it large subsidies and in other ways protected its interests. But the principal service rendered by the proletarian and T.U. forces has been educating the masses to understand the Marxian purpose of the mass theatre and to keep eye and mind on its essentials—a content reflecting the building of national economy and expressing the new socialist ideology, and the application of those principles which the masses unconsciously applied in 1918. Content first, content to determine form, the dramatic importance of class struggle, of socialist realism, of the truth of history and of party policy.

While the main stem of the theatrical tree continued to grow and strengthen under the care of the workers and their official allies of the proletarian school like P. M. Kerjentsev, an active supporter of the " proletarianisation of the stage," and now chairman of the All-Union Committee of Arts, there appeared another stem of an entirely different character. It was an off-shoot of the pre-revolution private reform theorist theatre which revolutionary events grafted on the Soviet proletarian stem. Of the six leading directors of this Right theatre, as it may be called, two (Lunacharski, who controlled the State Academic theatres, and Meyerhold, who went communist soon after the revolution) had a knowledge of Marxian theory and Soviet ideology. The other

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four, Stanislavski, Nemerovich-Dantchenko, Tairov and Granovski, did not or would not know what they were expected to do. For a very long time they were men closely concerned with their old theatrical, æsthetic and technical systems. All alike continued on a pre-war groundwork, formalistic, æsthetic, naturalistic and realistic (not socialist realism). It is on record that in 1919 Stanislavski appeared producing Balladina, a poem by a nineteenth century Polish author, upholding the catholic attitude towards marriage, monogamy and honour in direct opposition to communistic belief. For several years Tairov, with his theory of rhythmic synthesis, had a procession of systems of abstract settings, passing from the static cubism of Thamir in 1916, to the extreme of urban constructivism of "The Man Who Was Thursday" in 1924. But though these theorists neglected the Soviet job and came into conflict with the proletarians and Government for doing so, they did extremely brilliant work of its kind which made a contribution to public culture and attracted a large number of foreign visitors. Unfortunately the latter came to look at this work and nothing more. They returned home with the news that they had discovered not a new theatre of the workers but the old Russian theatre nicely rejuvenated. Even to-day some report, "The Soviet theatre has done nothing."

In spite of the rise of this theoretical structure, the true work of the workers went on behind, and in the non-professional theatre. In this particular activity we see the continuation of the Government reciprocity policy. We see factory, plant, field and other industrial workers in the academic Right theatres checking, criticising, supervising new plays, operas and ballets, and demanding the withdrawal of offending pieces. We find them demanding and receiving from the State theatres hundreds of seats, and buying up whole performances for next to nothing. We see growing alliances between factory and plant workers and theatre workers; visits of professional companies to factories, and their plays and acting severely criticised; spread of the Young Workers theatre (Tram); increase of travelling collectives; increase of workers clubs and circles; a surprising growth of Red Army theatrical centres, the great social importance of which cannot be over-estimated seeing that the Red Army is drawn from the workers and peasants and the masses see themselves in all the best and most heroic that it does on the stage.

Thus we see the great theatrical tree throwing out innumerable intertwining proletarian branches. And we pass to great constructive ideas and momentous events that further fertilised it and produced its flowers and first fruit. From 1928 four unparalleled revolutions materially carried on the "proletarianisation" of the theatre. The industrial revolution (consequent upon the Five Years Plan) set workers everywhere dramatising facts and forms of the industrial effort. Then with the agrarian revolution came the collective farm theatre to set

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farm workers dramatising their new life and labour and the Soviet facts and forms of the collective farm effort. The cultural revolution and the adoption of New Constitution were pregnant with theatrical consequences. In the cultural revolution there were two tremendous facts that made for the development of the People's theatre. The year 1927 saw the beginning of the famous Olympiads. They brought large groups of theatrical workers together in friendly rivalry thus working for national and international friendship and unity. An organisation of a different character was seen in the Annual Theatre Festival which began in 1933. This review of the work, mainly of the academic theatres, served to attract many foreign visitors to Moscow and it helped a few fair and close observers to realise that a great theatrical change was imminent. The second fact, the remarkable rise of the National theatre to power, made the nature of the change clear. They understood that the original four Government lines had merged at last. By 1936 the mass amateur theatre, the National theatre of the U.S.S.R., the State Academic training theatre, and the old-established professional theatres (partly through the reciprocity movement, and partly owing to the attainment of a long delayed reform) had united on common ground. Initiated by *Pravda*, a wide and severe criticism of the non-socialist attitude of the old Right intelligentsia, of their concrete irregularities, defects and complete failure to participate in the essential great constructive effort brought them into line with the real building force. At last they admitted that they knew where to go and what to do.

So came the first fruit, the many and varied peoples of the vast Soviet Union united on a common ground of theatrical democracy, restarting where the theatre began in 1917. Testifying in the New Theatre of Peoples Art by a vivid performance of the mass character, that the theatre in spite of terrible struggle, in spite of the serious diversion caused by the Right group working against the Left theatre, has grown up spontaneously, not theoretically, in a vast community released by the Revolution from the stranglehold tyranny of the Tsarist autocracy. And its future promise ? A new theatre connected and linked up with the collective creative effort of a true socialist democracy. A theatre that shall spread the spirit of peace as no other human cultural institution can do.

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COLONIES & WAR
To-day's Big Issue

BY REGINALD BRIDGEMAN

AT THE PRESENT time plans are being laid by Imperialist Powers for a redivision of the world. The British National Government are showing readiness to join in a new deal of territory, and what is far more serious, wide sections of British opinion are disposed to support the Government in this course. In the House of Lords, for instance, on all sides the possibility of negotiation with Germany on Colonial questions has been admitted. In hardly any section of the British Press have the needs and rights of democracy in the future management of the world been voiced. It is difficult for the illiterate millions of Colonial workers, and for the oppressed workers in Eastern Europe and in the Balkan countries to receive knowledge of the ambitions and intentions towards them of the imperialists. Even those who can read have no access to a free press, and in many countries the importation of foreign newspapers is rigorously controlled and frequently prohibited. According to recent statements by Fascist leaders, Germany has entered a new phase, viz., that of the " re-establishment of her equality of colonial rights." At innumerable " colonial meetings " taking place in different towns in Germany, the exploits of the first German colonists in Africa are glorified. General Von Epp, Governor of Bavaria and head of the Fascist Party's colonial service, has stated recently that the colonial question to-day cannot be separated from Germany's economic problems. Germany will follow the path of the unilateral revision of the colonial articles of the Versailles Treaty. " The conditions " said the General, " which had obliged Germany to give up her colonial properties, no longer exist to-day, and therefore whatever juridical ground there may have been for preserving the system of Mandates no longer exists."

The unilateral denunciation by Germany of the Colonial Articles of the Versailles Treaty is an insufficient reason for the restoration of the Colonies. Such an act, however, like the tearing up of the Locarno Treaty and the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, makes the realisation of the aggressive aims of German Fascism easier. This urging of her colonial claims has for a long time been a means by which Fascist Germany has been able to exert pressure on England to leave her a free hand in the South-East of Europe.

The Fascist Press of Germany openly advocated a bloc of 200,000,000 of human beings, Germans, Italians and Japanese, who will not allow themselves to be manœuvred by the democratic Powers.

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After the signature in Rome on November 6 of the Anti-Communist agreement between Japan, Italy and Germany, the feeling of anxiety increased in the Danubian and Balkan States. Clearly this agreement not only facilitates Germany's struggle for colonies in Africa, but also helps towards the fulfilment of the German plan for the creation of a Mitteleuropa.

The Prague Press has pointed out that concessions to Germany which have the effect of strengthening her influence in the Danube basin, will lead to still more insistent demands for the restoration of the colonies.

The colonial question was examined in all its aspects at the Anglo-French Ministerial Conference in London at the end of November. The communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Conference declared that the colonial question involves a number of countries and cannot therefore be dealt with in isolation; it must form part of a general discussion, if it is to be settled. It is plain that there can be no possibility of a lasting peace either in Europe or Asia until the colonial problem is liquidated, and it is no less plain that the necessary settlement must be achieved in consultation with the representatives of the colonial lands and in accordance with their desires, in so far as their own territories are concerned. The difficulty of ascertaining their desires is not insurmountable. Some method of holding plebiscites can no doubt be devised. A plebiscite under international auspices was held to enable the future of the Saar to be determined. A plebiscite has been suggested for the purpose of determining the future of Austria. In India, where the population is largely illiterate, elections have been successfully held. If the colonial question means the question of considering the interests of the colonial peoples, what is there to prevent the peoples of colonial territories from deciding how they wish to be governed ?

It must, of course, be understood that their choice will not be limited to a decision between British, French or German rule, but that they will also have the right of voting for national independence, free from any sort of foreign tutelage or control, should they desire to do so. Such consultations will take a long time, but there is no reason why they should not be immediately begun.

It was agreed in the Anglo-French Ministerial Communiqué that the colonial question would require much more extended study. In 1921 the principle was established that the approval of the United States is essential to the validity of any determination which may be reached regarding mandated territories and it will in the first place be necessary to secure the agreement of the United States of America as well as of the League of Nations to any changes in the present distribution of Mandates.

This principle was invoked in August of this year in connection with the proposed modification of the Palestine Mandate, and in 1932, at the time of the termination of the special relations between the United

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Kingdom and Iraq, the United States Government set forth its views regarding its rights relating to the termination of mandatory régimes. The American Government is concerned to provide for the protection of American interests in mandated territories on a basis of equality with those of other Governments and their nationals. As regards Palestine, Mr. Eden informed the United States Ambassador that the British Government fully appreciated and indeed welcomed the interest taken by the United States in the question of the solution of the Palestine problem, adding that it was their intention to keep the United States Government fully informed of any proposals which they might put forward to the Council of the League for the modification of the Mandate.

If the principle of collective security as set forth in the Covenant of the League of Nations be accepted and acted on, the supposed difficulty of the surrender by the British people of their "responsibility" towards native peoples whose "protection" they have undertaken to ensure, will not arise. We know in fact that solemn guarantees given in the name of the people of Britain, notably in the case of Abyssinia, whose integrity Britain, France and Italy had undertaken by the Treaty signed in London in 1906 to maintain intact by acting together on the basis of previous Treaties, and of China, whose national sovereignty and territorial integrity had been guaranteed by Britain and her eight co-signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty of Washington in 1922, have proved valueless to the peoples to whom they were given because they have been ignored by Britain.

All members of the League of Nations, and peaceful nations like the United States of America, will be equally and jointly responsible for the protection of each individual member of the League of Nations, into which it is to be presumed that every liberated nation will desire to enter, as the Iraqis and the Egyptians did when they obtained their independence from foreign rule, and as it has been proposed that the Syrian and Palestinian peoples should do, when the Mandates under which they have been governed are terminated.

The granting of independence to subject nations is the essential condition if there is to be established a state of equal and harmonious relations between all States throughout the world. Unequal treaties such as those now in force between quasi-colonial countries and Protectorates, like China or Morocco, and imperialist countries, must be replaced by treaties negotiated on the basis of equality. The arbitrary control of one State by another, wherever it exists, must be ended. The ending of control by means of an army of occupation, of gunboats or of air-forces does not mean, of course, the severing of relationship between a country like Britain and lands formerly her colonies which may obtain their national independence. It will merely mean the ending of the exploitation which is inevitable under foreign rule and it will inaugurate a new era of equal and friendly relations entirely favourable

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to the fullest development of international trading and co-operation.

The imperialist system has brought increasing dislocation into world economy, because colonial countries have been regarded and treated as the exclusive possessions of the metropolitan country, which controls their internal economy, their relations with other Powers, and, perhaps most important of all, their credit and financial machinery. To take an outstanding example, the arbitrary control by Britain of the financial systems of India and Burma, which between them contain almost one-fifth of the world's population, and the linking of the rupee to sterling, are matters affecting the economy of many other countries. Yet the Indians and the Burmans are debarred from direct dealings with other States because the British Government directs and controls their external relations as well as their finances. It even appoints their representatives at Geneva, the principal of whom, His Highness the Aga Khan, has spent much time in Germany lately and is believed to have played an important part in arranging for the recent visit of Lord Halifax, ex-Viceroy of India, to the Fascist leaders of Germany.

One of the main reasons why Germany wants colonies is not merely to obtain raw materials from them or to populate them, but in order that she may control their currency and credit systems and fix the price of the raw materials exportable from them to suit her own financial requirements. The Royal Institute of International Affairs has explained in its Report on the Colonial Problem that in a world in which the currency situation is confused and shifting, linked currencies are an advantage to intra-imperial trade, more especially when exchange restrictions are operative in foreign markets. The triangular clearing agreement between Germany, Holland and the Dutch Indies is a device for overcoming the obstacles to foreign trade which a synthetic currency as shaky as that of Germany may create. Germany requires Indonesian raw materials, but does not export much to the Dutch East Indian market; Holland on the other hand, supplies the Indies and imports from Germany. The foreign exchange problem is solved by an arrangement whereby the debts are set off against one another in Holland. Consequently the re-export trade of Holland to Germany of Indies produce is very large, and tends to supplant direct trade between the Indies and Germany. In connection with this question of the control of currencies it is to be noted that when Sir Arthur Salter, M.P., speaking as an economist, to the Manchester Statistical Society on December 2nd, put forward ten points for an international trade policy likely in his opinion to tend towards international peace, he placed the stabilisation of currencies at the head of the list.

There are various influences which tend to develop the trade of a Metropolitan Power with its colonial possessions. The same report which we have quoted above explains that familiarity with the language of the metropolitan country and the community of habit and sentiment, which is promoted by the education of selected students from colonial

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and semi-colonial countries at universities in the metropolitan country, favour the establishment of trade connections with the home country. Government loans, especially those for public works, are usually granted on the understanding that imported materials will be ordered from the home country. The British Colonial Development Act, 1929, contained a clause that the proceeds of loans should so far as possible be spent on Empire produce.

If Germany could control the financial system of colonial territories and link it to her own, she would be less dependent on world prices which are mainly fixed by her trade competitors and might even be in the position to capture markets. In the world to-day the control of the financial machinery of a country like India is of almost greater importance than its strategical control. The credit of Britain has repeatedly been bolstered by the export of bullion from her colonial domain, especially India, whenever the needs of the Bank of England require.

Statistics published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs of the trade of metropolitan countries with their colonies reveal a tendency for the proportion of every Power's colonial trade to increase as compared with its total trade, although this does not necessarily indicate that exports and imports between the colonies and the Metropolitan country are increasing. It is at the time of a rise or a fall in world prices of primary commodities that the power to control the credit and currency of the colonial lands becomes specially important. During the five years 1930-34, prices of agricultural products shrank by almost fifty per cent., which especially hit the farmers and peasants throughout the colonial world, but in colonies controlled by Britain there was no such decrease in the prices of the iron and steel products exported by British manufacturers. For instance the export price of steel rails of £8 10s. 0d. per ton did not vary between 1929 and 1934, whereas the price of raw jute fell from £27.75 per ton in 1929 to £16.94 per ton in 1934, and coffee fell during the same period from 165s. per cwt. to 73s. 6d. Throughout this period neither the Government nor the money-lenders' demands were reduced in proportion to the fall in agricultural prices. The main burden of the financial crisis was borne by the colonial workers. Commenting on this situation the Chatham House Report says: "It is, perhaps, natural that efforts should be directed to making the colonial economy complementary to the metropolitan economy. But a colony may only be able to secure full development by taking its place at some time in some larger regional aggregation, and it is therefore to the interest of the colonial community that regional economic relations should be developed. To direct colonial economy towards a purely complementary relation with a distant metropolitan country is to retard the possibilities of maturity."

The colonial problem, too frequently considered from a national angle, has its international aspect, and the controversy caused by the international aspect of the colonial problem has thrown too great an

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emphasis on purely territorial questions and has allowed the intricacy and diversity of the colonial problem as a whole to fall into the background. The problem is not only one between "haves" and "have nots," but it is concerned with a process of dynamic development rather than with a static collection of territorial and economic facts.

COLONIES AND "THE TIMES"

In October correspondence poured into the columns of *The Times* on the question of the German claim to colonies. This correspondence is a deeply interesting revelation of the spontaneous thinking of representative Englishmen in regard to colonial questions. *The Times* itself which had encouraged the correspondence, stressed that the German claim was urgent, and presented it as an integral part of the larger problem of the future peace of the world. At that time it had not been possible to arrange a discussion between the Governments, and there seemed to *The Times* to be good reasons why the conclusions which were forming themselves in England among those who had some claim to speak on the subject from different points of view should be exposed and canvassed in public against the day when they could be tested officially.

In a very important leading article on October 28—we mention the date because it has been so widely reported that the proprietor of *The Times* played a prominent part in planning and arranging the visit in November of Viscount Halifax to General Goering and Herr Hitler—it was emphasised that there is no support in Britain for the crude belief that the Versailles settlement must persist for all time in every detail. While in the matter of colonial administration the British people were all entitled to be proud of the long and glorious record of the British Empire, it would be hypocrisy to pretend that no other European race was fit to be entrusted with it. In Africa particularly, there was a strong case for enlisting the co-operation of all the best European experience. This meant a genuine attempt to find for Germany some acceptable field for development. It did not mean in the view of the leading British imperialist organ, the retrocession of Tanganyika—nor did it necessarily mean the extension of the mandatory system to all the African native territories. The suggestion was, as the word development implied—that through the common action of three or four of the great colonising Powers with contiguous African territories, a field could be opened to Germany. The Powers to whom this definition would apply are Britain, France, Belgium and Portugal, there is also the small territory of Spanish Guinea contiguous to the French Cameroons.

The idea that African Chartered Companies should be formed in which German capital could be invited to participate has been put forward. Some such arrangement for colonial partnership has already been made between Italy and Germany for the purpose of exploiting the gold resources of Ethiopia.

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This correspondence which *The Times* published opened with a letter signed by Mr. Vernon Bartlett, Professor Gilbert Murray, Lord Noel-Buxton and Professor Arnold Toynbee. These distinguished men, the Foreign Editor of the *News Chronicle*, the Chairman of the League of Nations Union, the leading spokesman of the Labour Party on colonial affairs in the House of Lords, and the Director of Studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs, seizing the opportunity presented by the speech of the High Commissioner of South Africa at Montreal, in which Mr. Te Water had pleaded for a speedy examination at a Conference table of Germany's point of view in regard to the colonial question, expressed the hope that Mr. Te Water's initiative would be followed up on certain conditions, viz. :

(1) That the natives of the non-self-governing territories (both those which are and those which are not at present under Mandate) should not be sacrificed in any way for the sake of improving the relations between European Powers.

(2) That both in the administration of non-self-governing territories and in the matter of access to such legitimate sources of supply and markets as these territories may offer, the European Powers should be put upon a footing of approximate equality with one another.

The signatories pointed out that while the first of these conditions forbids any relapse into an unrestricted exercise of sovereignty on the part of any European Power in any non-self-governing territory that is at present held in trust and administered under an international mandate, the second of these conditions calls for a revision of the colonial chapter of the Versailles Treaty. It was suggested that both conditions could be satisfied simultaneously if the European Powers could bring themselves to agree upon three measures, viz. :

(i) That some at least of the former German colonies should be handed back to Germany to be administered by her, not under the pre-war régime, but under the existing Mandates.

(ii) Those European Powers which possess Crown Colonies should consent to place at least an equivalent portion of those Crown Colonies under the same Mandatory régime. In this way Germany would not find herself the only Power that was being asked to administer under a Mandate colonial territories over which she has once exercised unrestricted sovereign powers.

(iii) All non-self-governing territories ought to be thrown open to the trade of all nations on equal terms.

To these suggestions came a prompt reply from the Conservative ex-Colonial Secretary, Mr. Leopold Amery, pointing out that the mandatory territories under Britain or France are governed on the same lines as their non-mandatory colonies, that if the natives of Tanganyika are happy under British rule it is because it is British rule and not because of the Mandate, and that a return to German rule

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would not be rendered any less unpalatable to them by the thought that their rulers would publish an annual report for the benefit of Geneva. If Mr. Vernon Bartlet, Professor Gilbert Murray, Lord Noel-Buxton and Professor Arnold Toynbee thought that it was worth sacrificing native populations who were happy under British rule, and running all the strategic risks involved in having German submarines, air bases and troops at some of the most vulnerable points in the whole system of British imperial defence, on the offchance of finally appeasing Germany's ambitions in Europe and abroad, they were entitled to urge that point of view, but must not delude the public by the idea that there was some ingenious formula by which they could satisfy their consciences in respect of either the responsibility to the native population or of the freedom of trade, and at the same time satisfy the German demand.

Viscount Astor replied to Mr. Amery stating that Germany had demanded colonies partly on economic grounds, but that her real claim was based on status. She did not wish to be put in a lower category than Holland, Belgium and Portugal, not to mention France, Italy and Britain. If native wishes were to decide the ownership or suzerainty of their territory, Mr. Amery could not limit this principle to the ex-German colonies. He must apply it to the Congo, Morocco, possibly even to some of the lands " over which we exercise jurisdiction." No irretrievable step should be taken against making some concessions on colonies either direct or indirectly to Germany.

Captain Kennedy wrote as a Conservative who had never yet voted other than Conservative at a Parliamentary Election, that he knew many Conservatives who felt like himself that an agreed settlement between Britain and Germany was the primary need of international politics, and that such an agreement would immensely facilitate the solution of every other problem.

HITLER'S REAL AIMS

Sir Malcolm Robertson, ex-Ambassador with more than 30 years diplomatic experience, much of it in German lands, wrote in a totally different note. He urged the study of Herr Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, which is still the text book of German schools. Whatever might be the new found enthusiasm of Herr Hitler for German colonies, Sir Malcolm preferred to rely upon his written word. Herr Hitler's argument is that Germany is not, and never has been a " World Power." Her colonial and naval policy before the war was inane (unsinnig). A few negro territories were of no importance. Her pre-war boundaries in Europe were wholly inadequate, and it is not sufficient even to recover them. German policy must be directed towards the conquest of land in Europe for the German plough. Such land could only be found to the eastward. It would not fall quietly into German hands, but must be conquered with the sword. Germany's policy must be to unite all

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German citizens wherever situated, but notably in Europe and subsequently to conquer the necessary land or soil for them to maintain their existence. To Herr Hitler the colonial question was a matter of no vital importance at all, though possibly one of prestige for the German people. What he is definitely aiming for is the conquest of Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Polish Corridor and the Ukraine. With those in his hands the Balkan States would be but vassals of a Great German Empire dominating Central and Eastern Europe. In reference to Herr Hitler's offers of co-operation and peace mentioned by Lord Astor, Sir Malcolm wrote: "I should be very deeply impressed if he (Lord Astor) could and would quote any utterance of the Fuehrer's or any written statement of his in which he formally, or even by hint withdraws his announced policy of conquering land in Europe which will increase the area of the Motherland."

Sir John Harris, Secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society, put in a plea for an impartial enquiry into the wishes of the inhabitants of the colonial countries which might be affected before any change in colonial administration were carried out, but such an enquiry would in his opinion be conducted from the point of view of trusteeship and co-operation in sharing the white man's burden, instead of being conducted with the Africans on the basis of freedom to determine their own future.

The Peace Pledge Union, in a letter signed by Mr. George Lansbury, Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede, and the late Canon Dick Sheppard, proclaimed their "substantial agreement" with *The Times* editorial of October 28 and recalled the terms of Point 5 of President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" as a basis for dealing with the colonial question. They advocated the abandonment of the private ownership of colonial possessions in favour of the extension of a revised mandate system to all non-self-governing territories, and the establishment of an international colonial service through a League of Nations as the instrument of the new experiment in international co-operation.

HALIFAX ENDANGERS PEACE

In the London Talks between MM. Chautemps and Delbos and the Prime Minister, Mr. Eden and Lord Halifax, the colonial question was in the forefront of the discussions. The French Ministers were astonished at the magnitude of Herr Hitler's demands. There is still no certainty as to whether the main objective of Germany is the realisation of her desires in regard to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Memel and the Ukraine, or the fulfilment of colonial ambitions. One of the results of Signor Mussolini's State visit to Berlin in September was that he agreed to make the German colonial claims his own, but it was not made clear how far he was prepared to let Germany go in Austria. Signor Mussolini has his own interests to advance. Lord Halifax's sympathetic attention to Germany's demands had one immediate result: it

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encouraged Poland to claim a share in any distribution of colonies which might take place.

In the Soviet Union and also in France the view has been clearly expressed that the visit of Lord Halifax to Germany has brought nearer the danger of war, that the real desires of Germany are for expansion in Europe rather than the development of an Empire beyond the seas; that Herr Hitler will not neglect any opportunity of obtaining colonies if they are offered to him, but that the importance of the colonial campaign is to provide him with bargaining assets with a view to assuring the neutrality of Britain if not her active support in the event of his starting a war of conquest in Eastern Europe. The governing class of Britain is fully aware that an Anglo-German understanding will only be effective if France joins in it. All means are being used to push France, for the sake of maintaining cordial relations with England, to the point of sacrificing her friendships and her special position in Central Europe and in the Balkans.

The more carefully the colonial problem is studied, the more evident does it become that it is intertwined with the whole social system of the imperialist countries. British workers must study the colonial problem. They are being urged by the British imperialists to establish a solid national block for the defence of Imperialist interests. Rearmament is undertaken for the defence of these interests. The defence of the interests of the masses of our people lies not in the armed defence of imperialist interests, not in world dominion and colonial development, but in the freedom of all nations, great and small, from foreign dominion. The British Labour Movement must stand by the peoples who are struggling for their freedom. British workers must make the colonial struggle their own. World peace can be achieved by winning international freedom, not by making colonial concessions to Hitler and Mussolini, not by recognising alterations in national sovereignty effected by force. Mandates must be ended not extended; colonies must be freed not pooled.

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LENIN & GORKY

More Letters

[*The series of Lenin's letters to Maxim Gorky, which have been specially translated for the* LABOUR MONTHLY, *is now nearing its close; next month's instalment will be the last*].

p. 33. 14.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(Between 8 and 10 March, 1913. Kraków.)

DEAR A.M.,

I read the " manifesto " to-day . . . [1]

Apparently the amnesty for writers is complete. You must try to get back—*of course first ascertaining that they don't queer the pitch for you on account of " the school " and so on.*[2] I don't suppose they will be able to haul you up for that.

I hope you don't regard it as impossible " to accept " the amnesty ? That would be an incorrect view : these days a revolutionary can do *more* from inside Russia, and our deputies even sign " solemn promises."

For you, however, the question is not one of putting your signature to, but of making use of the amnesty. Drop me a line about your opinion and *views*. I hope you will call on us here if you go . . . for it's on the way !

But for the revolutionary writer the possibility of wandering about Russia (the new Russia) connotes the possibility of hitting the Romanovs and Co. a hundred times harder later on.

Did you get my last letter ? I have had no news for a long time. How are you ?

Yours,
LENIN.

P.S.—Did you get N.K.'s letter with the *materials ?*

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p. 35. 15.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(Beginning of May, 1913. Poronin.)

DEAR A.M.,

How are things in regard to the little article or tale for the May issue of *Prosveshchenie* ?[3] They write to me from there that 10—15

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thousand could be printed (how we are moving !) if there were something from you. Let me know whether there will be. And then *Pravda* will reprint it and the total will be 40,000 readers. Yes . . . the *Prosveshchenie's* affairs might do well; otherwise, damn it, there is not a single seasoned journal for the workers, for the *social democrats*, for revolutionary democracy; the others are all a filthy, soured lot.

How are you ? Have you had a rest and are you getting one in the summer ? You simply must get a *good* rest !

I am having troubles. My wife is ill with goitre. Nerves ! My nerves also play me up a little. We have come for the summer to the village of Poronin, near Zakopane. (My address: Herrn W. Uljanow. *Poronin. Galizien.* Austria.)

It's a fine district. Healthy. Height about 700 metres. Don't you think you ought to make a trip here ? We shall have some interesting workers from Russia. Zakopane (7 versts from us) is a well-known climatic health resort.

Have you seen Demyan Bedny's " Fables ? " I will send them, if you haven't. But if you've seen them, send a line to say how you like them.

Do you get *Pravda* and *Luch* regularly ? Our cause is going forward —in spite of everything—and the workers' party is being built up as a *revolutionary* social democratic one, against the liberal renegades and liquidators. There will be a holiday in our street. We are now exulting at the occasion of the workers' victory in Petersburg over the liquidators in the election for the committee of the new metal workers' union.[4]

But " your " Lunacharsky is good ! ! Oh, good ! Maeterlinck contains, he says, " scientific mysticism." . . . Or are Lunacharsky and Bogdanov no longer yours ?[5]

Joking apart, *keep well.* Drop me a line. *Have a* very good *rest.*

Yours,

LENIN.

Uljanow. Austria. *Poronin* (Galizien).

P.S.—What did you think of the jubilee number of *Pravda ?*[6]

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p. 37.

16.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(18-20 June, 1913. Poronin.)

DEAR ALEKSEI MAKSIMOVICH,

To-day we had a letter from Petersburg saying that our plan for the social-democratic deputies' visit here is near to realisation (*extra conspiratorial* this ! apart from you, it has been decided not to say a

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word to anyone). In addition to the six adherents of *Pravda*, they write that it is possible Tulyakov, Buryanov, Haustov and even perhaps Mankov will come. Probably we shall succeed in attracting someone from the workers (not deputies) as well. Please write whether you will be able to come or not ? (for a course of lectures or talks, or studies, as you like). It would be fine ! Seven km. from here (by train) is Zakopane—a very good health resort. As regards money for the journey—we will find some in all probability (so they write). We can collect and send you all information concerning Zakopane as a health resort.

If your health allows, come along for a time, really ! After London and the school at Capri you would see some workers also.

Malinowsky wanted to visit you, but didn't succeed; there wasn't time. Both he and all the other deputies send you warm greetings.

I await a reply, yours,

LENIN.

The papers are full of news about " the conflict."[7] I think they will close down *Pravda* for us. Maklakov will arrange that somehow or other, ignoring the Duma, against the Duma or anyhow, but he will do it.[8]

In that case we shall again devote all our energies to illegal literature —the only thing is there's no money.

But hasn't " the merchant " started giving yet ? It's time. It's just the very moment for it.

Address : Herrn Wl. Uljanow. *Poronin* (Galizien), Autriche.

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p. 40/41. 18.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(30 September, 1913. Poronin.)

DEAR A.M.,

I have been delayed a little in answering. I am sorry. How devilishly annoyed I was at Berne and later ! I was thinking, if you are at Verona (your telegram about Bebel was from Verona)—or perhaps Rom . . . ? why, I would *be able* to come from Berne to Verona ! But *then* we heard nothing of you *for months*.

What you write about your illness alarms me considerably. Are you wise to live at Capri without treatment ? The Germans have excellent sanatoria (*e.g.*, at St. Blasien, near Switzerland), where pulmonary troubles are treated and *completely* cured; they achieve *complete* recovery; they fatten you up, then they inure you systematically to the cold, they harden you against chills and turn out fit, efficient people.

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And after Capri, are you going for the winter to Russia? I'm terribly afraid that this will impair your health and render you incapable of work. Are there any *first-class* doctors in Italy?

Truly, go to a first-class doctor in Switzerland (I can find out names and addresses) or Germany,—devote two months to a *serious* cure in a *good* sanatorium. For to embezzle state property to no purpose, *i.e.*, to be ill and render yourself incapable of work, is impermissible in every way.

I heard (from the editor of *Prosveshchenie*, who had seen Ladyzhnikov, that you are displeased with *Pravda* for its dryness? You're right. But it is not easy to cure this fault at a stroke. We haven't the people. With *great* difficulty within a year from the start we had only achieved a *tolerable* editorial board in Petersburg. (I have forwarded your letter to *Prosveshchenie*.)

Write and tell me your plans and *about your health*. I urgently beg you *to go in seriously for a cure*—really *it is perfectly possible* to get cured, but to neglect oneself is simply impious and criminal.

Yours,

LENIN.

P.S.—We partly have had, and partly shall have, a good public. *And did you see Nash Put?*[9] What a success? It is already the second paper. We'll set up a third also—in the south.

Address: Uljanow. *Poronin* (Galizien), Austria. (In the winter I shall be at Kraków (Lubomirskiego. 51).

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p. 44. 19.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(Beginning of November, 1913. Kraków.)

DEAR ALEKSEI MAKSIMICH,

I am sending you by registered book post to-day the beginning of a novel which is to be published in *Prosveshchenie*. We think that you will not be against it. If, contrary to expectations, you are against it—then *telegraph* to *Prosveshchenie*: "Postpone Voitinsky" or "'*Do not print* Voitinsky's' novel."

The news that a "Bolshevik," although a former one, is treating you by a new method, worries me, really it does. God save us from doctor-comrades in general, and doctor-bolsheviks in particular. Really in 99 cases out of 100 doctor-comrades are "asses," as a certain *good* doctor once told me. I assure you that (except for trifling cases) one ought to be treated *only* by first-class celebrities. To submit oneself to a bolshevik's experiments—that is dreadful! But, of course, there is supervision by the Naples professors . . . if these professors are

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really expert. . . . You know, if you go in the winter, *at any rate*, visit first-class doctors in *Switzerland* and *Vienna*—it will be unpardonable if you do not do so. How are you now?

Yours,

N. LENIN.

P.S.—Things are going not too badly with us; in Petersburg the workers are linking up *in party groupings* in *all* legal organisations, the friendly societies included. We have had some interesting and capable fellows here also.

Address: Wl. Uljanow, 51. Ulica Lubomirskiego. 51. *Kraków. Krakau (Galizien)*.

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NOTES.

1. The "manifesto" of 21 February, 1913 (old style), declaring an amnesty to political offenders, in honour of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty of Tsars.

2. A "Higher social-democratic propagandist and agitator school for workers," organised at Capri in 1909, with Gorky's active participation.

3. A story by Gorky appeared in the June No. of *Prosveshchenie*.

4. In April, 1913, in the elections for the administration of the Petersburg Metalworkers' Union the Bolshevik candidates had all been elected.

5. A reference to an article by Lunacharsky, "Fear and Hope," published in a Kiev journal in December, 1912.

6. The first birthday of *Pravda* should have been celebrated on Monday, 22 April, 1913. But as *Pravda* was not issued on Mondays the celebration No. was published next day, in a rather mutilated condition owing to a police search and confiscation of articles and materials on the previous Thursday.

7. A conflict had arisen between the Fourth Duma and the government in regard to the status and powers of the former.

8. *Pravda* was closed down by Petersburg court order on July 5, 1913, but continued under a succession of other names for many months after. N. A. Maklakov was the Minister for Home Affairs, on whose initiative *Pravda* was closed down.

9. *Nash Put*, newspaper issued by the Moscow Bolsheviks, some thirteen Nos. issued, from 25 August to 12 September, 1913 (old style).

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Distressed Areas

The Problem of the Distressed Areas by Wal Hannington. (Gollancz. 10s. 6d. Left Book Club Edition. 2s. 6d.).

THE MERE FACT that Hannington is the author of this book is a sufficient guarantee of its authority, for as Professor Laski says in his introduction: "he has literally lived with and for the unemployed ever since the close of the war . . . . there are few people in this country who know their problems as intimately as he does." But familiarity alone is not sufficient basis for the production of a first-class statement on one of the most glaring social problems of our generation. It would have been very easy for Hannington, just exactly because he *does* know, so intimately and personally, the men and women of the Distressed Areas, to have taken this opportunity simply to pour out all the fury, bitterness, indignation and compassion that fills the heart of any man who loves his fellow men, and has seen what society to-day is doing to several millions of them.

Those who already know and applaud Hannington's work in the National Unemployed Workers' Movement would have rejoiced at every word, well pleased that such an eloquent pen was devoted to these scathing and horrible exposures. Such of the unemployed as were able to borrow a copy might have marvelled to think what they and their like had endured for so many years and yet still retained their dignity, pride and restraint. But more than that—very little. Abyssinia, Spain, China—the public conscience has become so dulled and blunted by horror piled on horror, that the problem of the distressed areas is not regarded as a problem (except to the unfortunate people who live in them). It is shelved, pushed into the background. Cotton wool in the ears. Blinkers over the eyes. Forget it! No one need starve in Britain! Britons Never Shall be Slaves!

Hannington's book smashes down all these nice little private fences and breaks in, not rudely but irrevocably, on this air of studious detachment. It hammers home the inescapable conviction that this problem is *Society's* problem, everybody's problem. I defy any honest reader, whatever his political views, to read it through without a dawning realisation that if he acquiesces in the conditions therein described, he shares responsibility for their continuance; if on the contrary, he shudders at the record of suicides, malnutrition, broken homes, shattered ambitions, he has no alternative but to line up in the fight against them, and against the Government whose policy is their cause.

To the agonised cry of the unemployed, "Can No Prayers Pierce Thee?" the Government contemptuously replies: "No, none that thou hast wit enough to make." Not prayers, but united protest, united action, united votes, are necessary to move the National Government. It is impossible for Hannington's book not to play a part in organising this united action as the N.U.W.M. has notably done in the past.

A considerable amount of space is devoted to the Commissioners' Reports, and rightly so, for not merely do they supply a mine of valuable information, not merely do they show these men growing more and more appalled at the position which exists, more and more bewildered and angry at the rejection of most of their efforts by the Government, but they prove conclusively that their very appointment was, as the *Manchester Guardian* of November 15, 1934,

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described it: "a good and inexpensive way of evading the question" on the part of the Government. Two million pounds was the sum allocated to the Special Areas Commissioners. In one year alone, this Government spent £4,900,000 on subsidising the unprofitable (except to shareholders) and unnecessary beet-sugar industry!

For those who are less impressed by agitators and politicians than by the trained authority of the medical profession, there is an imposing selection of quotations from Conference speeches, statements to the press, and Medical Officers' Reports from, among others, Dr. Fraser of Cumberland, Dr. Sharpe of Preston, Dr. Spence of Newcastle, Dr. O'Hara and Dr. Falconer of Durham, Dr. Rankin of South Wales, Dr. Howell of Hammersmith, and those two distinguished nutrition experts, Sir John Boyd Orr and Dr. M'Gonigle, to whose professional honesty we are indebted for an emphatic rebuttal of the attempts of Government experts to shift responsibility for malnutrition on to the shoulders of the poor mother. "Give the workers sufficient income to enable them to have a free choice of food and they will bring them to a proper health level." said Sir John Boyd Orr to a Medical Conference at Norwich on September 10, 1935. While Dr. M'Gonigle wrote to *The Times* on March 26, 1936: "Beware all dicta of persons who for long denied the existence of any considerable amount of malnutrition, and who now attribute its existence to the housewives' ignorance of food values and cooking. Insufficient purchasing power, and not the ignorance of food values, is the dominant cause of malnutrition."

Hannington deals carefully, fairly and extremely convincingly with all the attempted "solutions" of the problem—industrial transference, and settlement, training camps, social service centres and the rest of them. His section: "Is there a fascist danger among the unemployed," I regard as an extremely timely warning to the whole working-class movement, and one which we dare not ignore.

His positive proposals as to what can be done are far too carefully and precisely worked out to lend themselves to an abbreviated summary. You must read the whole book to appreciate their merit, their need, and above all their practicality. I would only like to underline and emphasise the correctness of Professor Laski's concluding remarks in his preface: "If the Labour Party would make the facts and lessons of Mr. Hannington's book a daily reality in their lives, it would, I am confident, transform their outlook." Readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY can do much to make this hope a reality.

MARJORIE POLLITT.

Soviet Medicine

Socialised Medicine in the Soviet Union by Henry E. Sigerist. (Gollancz. 15s.).

"WHAT IS WRONG with Medicine in England?" This is a question which obtrudes itself into the news just now, and the public demand for change has been great enough to stir even the British Medical Association from its complacency. In fact, several bodies are evolving schemes for improving our health services, although most of their suggestions are timid palliatives; and the intention of the Government to extend National Health Insurance to youths and girls, is an attempt to appease the growing anxiety.

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Those interested in the subject cannot do better than study the methods adopted by the Soviet Union, which has made medicine a public function of the State. After the Revolution, the problem facing the new régime was so vast as to appal any but the most courageous. Russia was a land of famines, and of such scourges as small-pox, typhus, cholera and plague. The Great War, the Revolution, and the War of Intervention had mutilated the already meagre medical services. Undaunted by the stupendous task by which they were faced, the new rulers set out from the start to give maximum health protection to every single citizen. They determined to eliminate famine, to check the sinister power of communicable diseases, and to give an unequalled medical service free to all.

Dr. Sigerist is especially qualified to describe these endeavours, for he is Professor of the History of Medicine in a famous American university, and is able to form an expert view of the trend of Medicine. His knowledge of medicine in other countries enables him to make authoritative comparisons between the Soviet Union and capitalist countries. Perhaps the outstanding difference with which Dr. Sigerist deals is the attitude towards prevention of disease. The whole basis of the health services in the U.S.S.R. is the " maintenance of health." This is borne out by the statement that whereas 60 per cent. of the expenditure on health services in the Soviet Union is devoted to preventive measures, in the United States of America only 1 dollar in 30 is spent on prevention. Moreover, the system of central planning of all the services prevents the separation into water-tight compartments of curative and preventive activities. In Britain, the State limits its interest in preventive medicine to safeguarding us against communicable diseases, but the Socialist State is also greatly concerned with protecting the health of the individual.

The policy adopted is to supervise the health of each citizen at every stage of his development. This book describes the creches, nursery schools, school feeding, health education, and similar health measures. The most careful attention is paid to working conditions. If an English doctor were to examine a man, and, as a result, advise him that his employment was unsuited to him, nothing further could be done about it ; but in the U.S.S.R. the workers themselves are responsible for assuring the highest hygienic standards at their work, and occupations can be changed to suit the needs of the individual. In the dangerous trades, and in the hardest tasks, there we find the greatest vigilance, with shorter hours, longer vacations and regular medical examinations of the members. The concern for output is obviously not the only one, and while the workers are in control they will take every step to improve their health and ensure their comfort.

All doctors, nurses and pharmacists are servants of the State, and though there is still a shortage of personnel, this difficulty is being steadily overcome. Entry to the profession in England is subject to a test of means ; in fact this is the most difficult test that has to be passed, but in the new Russia ability and suitability are the keys which admit. A medical career is freely open to those classes of people who are the subjects of age-long oppression —women, Jews, and the children of the workers. These Bolsheviks are curious folk—they believe that an able woman may sometimes be better fitted than an ambling Rugby footballer to become a good doctor ! They have even gone so far as to allow some 75 per cent. of their doctors to be women, so that in speaking of Medicine in the U.S.S.R., one is speaking in the main of the work of women ! What a contrast to London, where a handful of self-appointed governors can close the doors of a teaching hospital to women.

In capitalist countries some resentment is felt by doctors against the

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intrusion of lay people into their affairs, but the success of hospitals controlled by local authorities is the most potent factor in removing such obstacles. The local Soviet supervises the hospitals, the workers are in control of the health units, and millions of people are actively participating in promoting the good health of the nation! I recently saw in a Welsh town a novel attempt by workers to improve their medical services. A miniature polyclinic, after the Soviet model, was set up, with several "general practitioners," an aural surgeon, an obstetrician, and a "general" surgeon, all working as a team in one building. It was illuminating to observe the high standard demanded by the workers.

Dr. Sigerist's work is of the greatest value to lay readers as well as to technicians, for it is an exhaustive account of almost all phases of a mighty Socialist experiment. The plan is some way from complete fulfilment, but there is reason for the greatest optimism, while the results already achieved are remarkable. There is a special chapter on research work, and here the value of State control and assistance is most striking. It is refreshing to find a vast country which does not leave research to the whims of the affluent.

DR. EDITH SUMMERSKILL.

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